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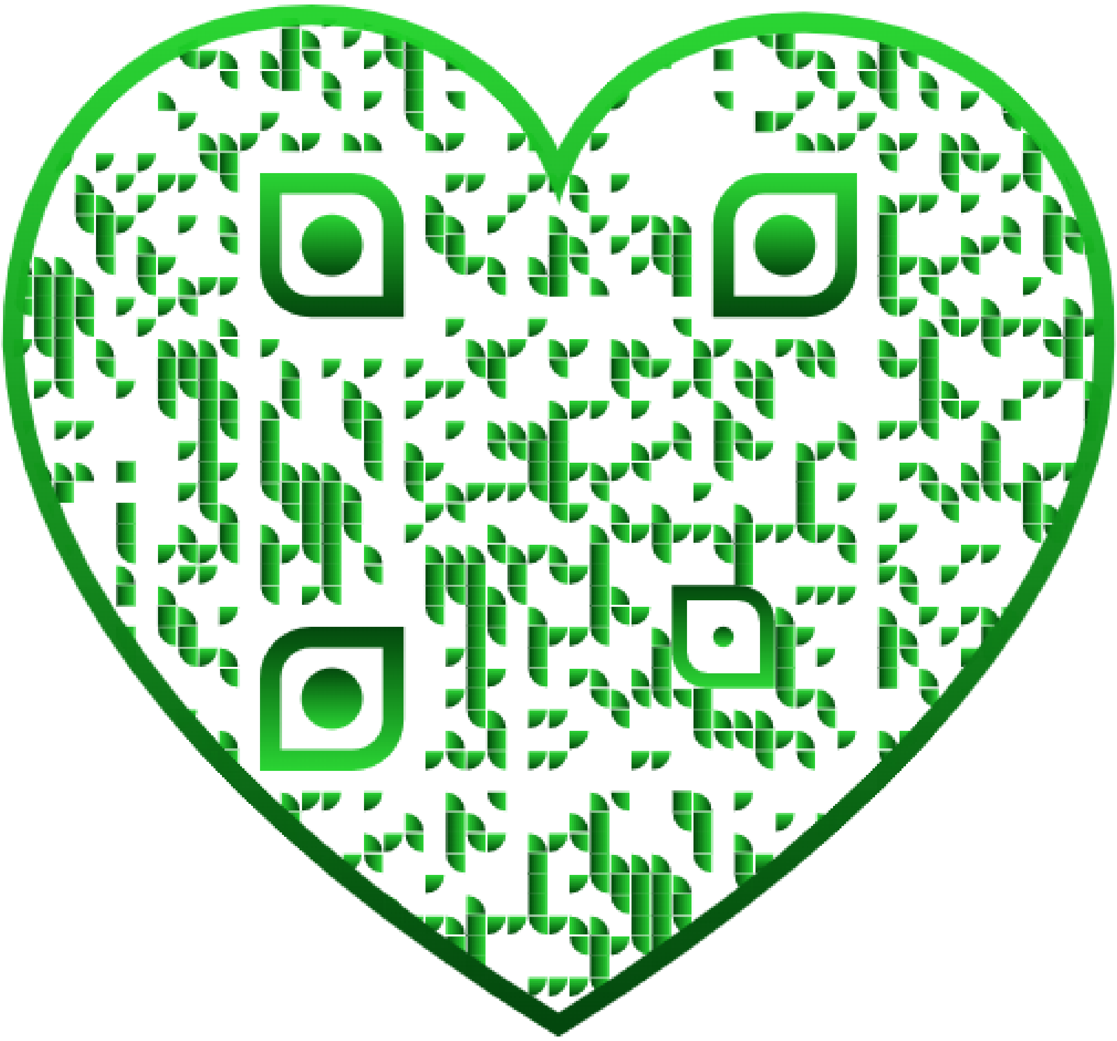
ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSES | GORGEOUS GARDENS | MARITIME MASSACRE



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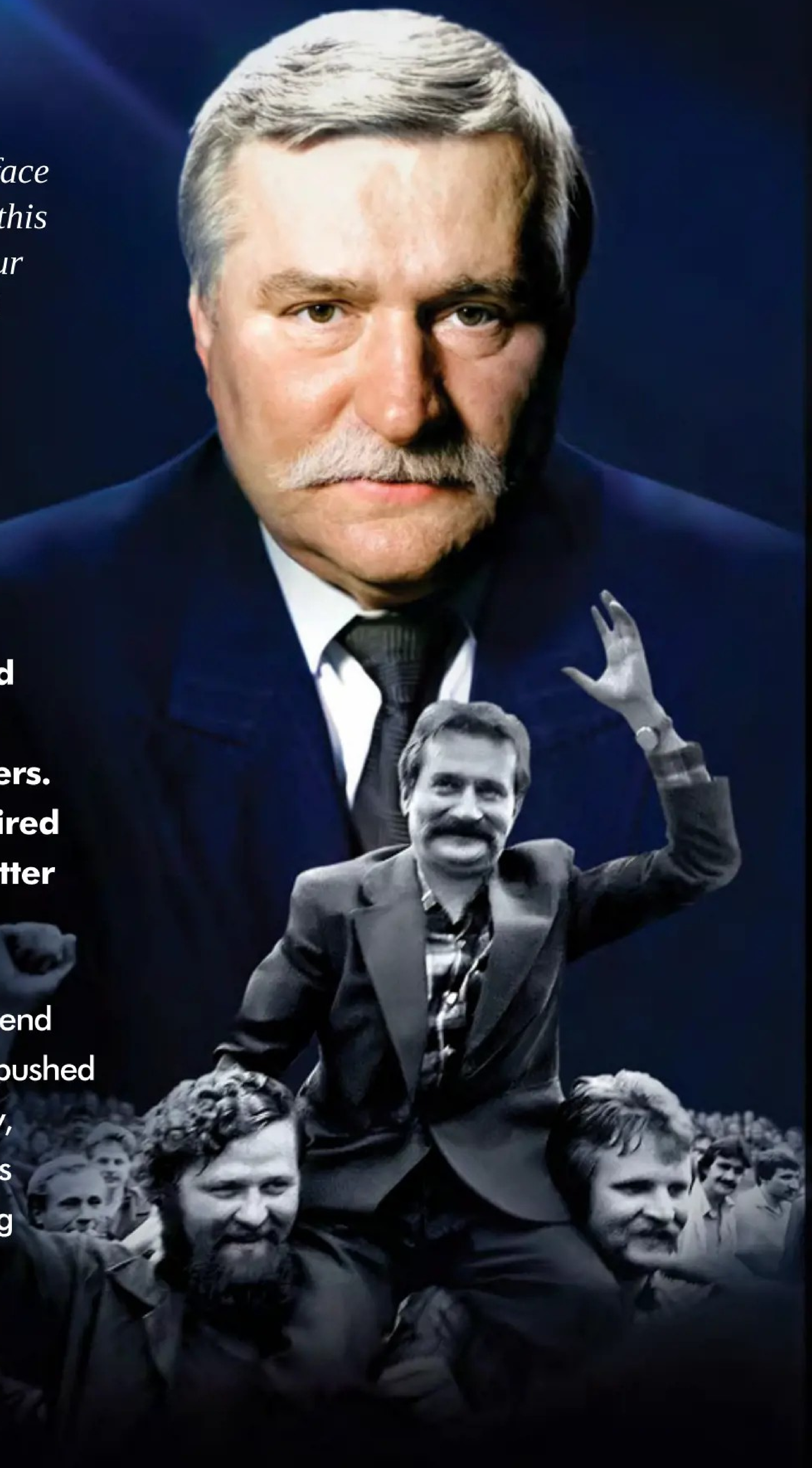

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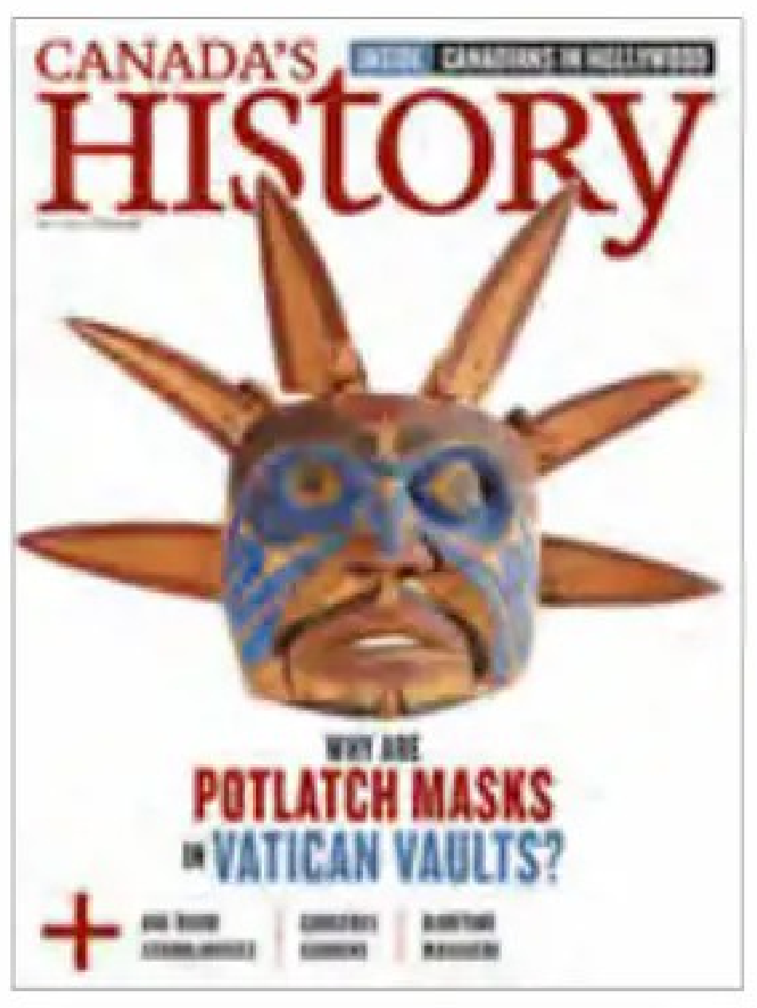

On the cover

Used with permission from the Vatican Museums, this photograph is of a Potlatch mask that depicts an entity that sheds light, such as the sun or a star.

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COMING UP IN CANADA'S HISTORY

Remembrance Today Grassroots groups are marking the homes of fallen soldiers to further connect their sacrifice to contemporary life.

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for Atlantic Canada

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Léo Melanson and the Acadian Builders of Sainte-Marie
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Learn more about the recipients at CanadasHistory.ca/BraggAward

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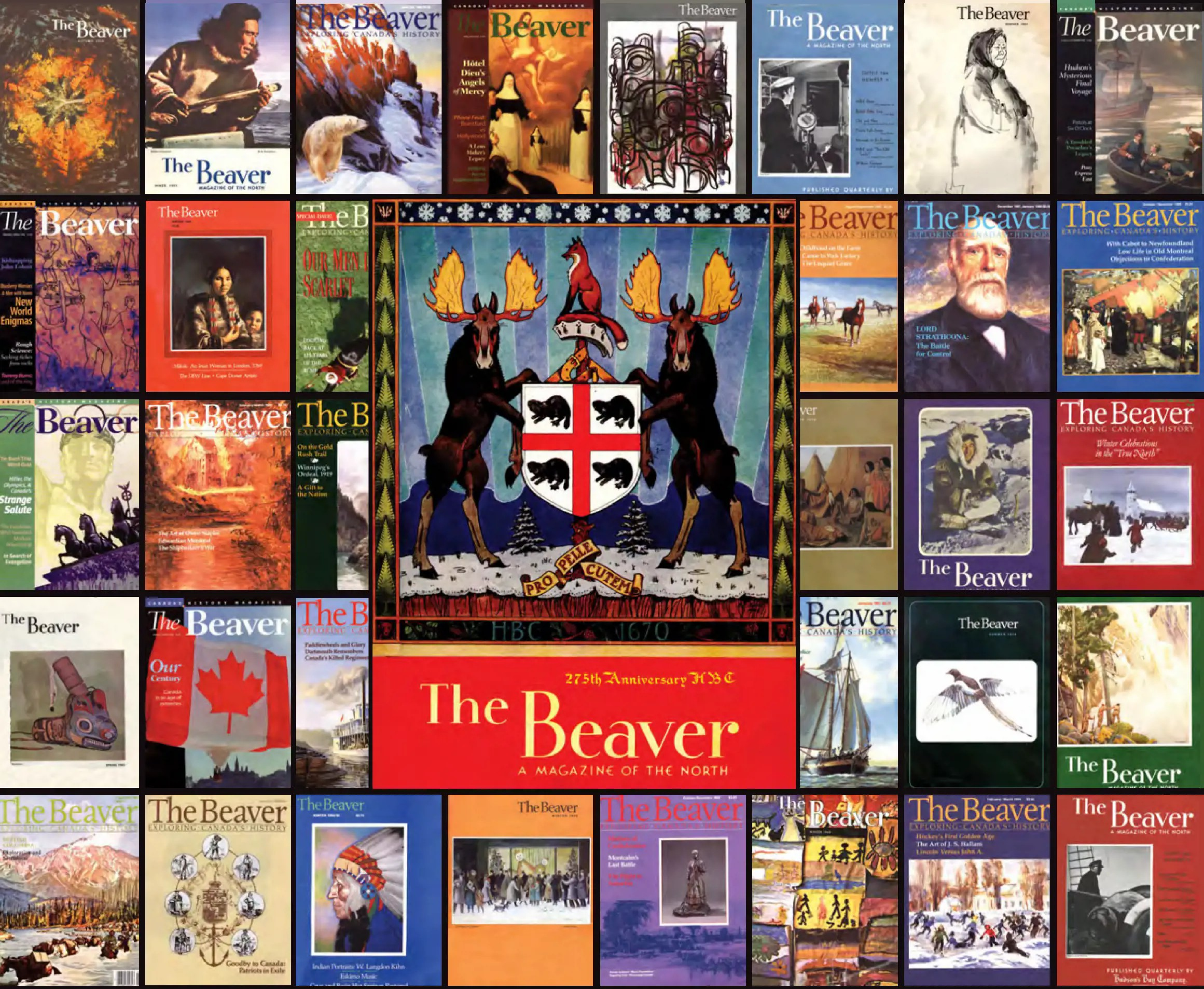
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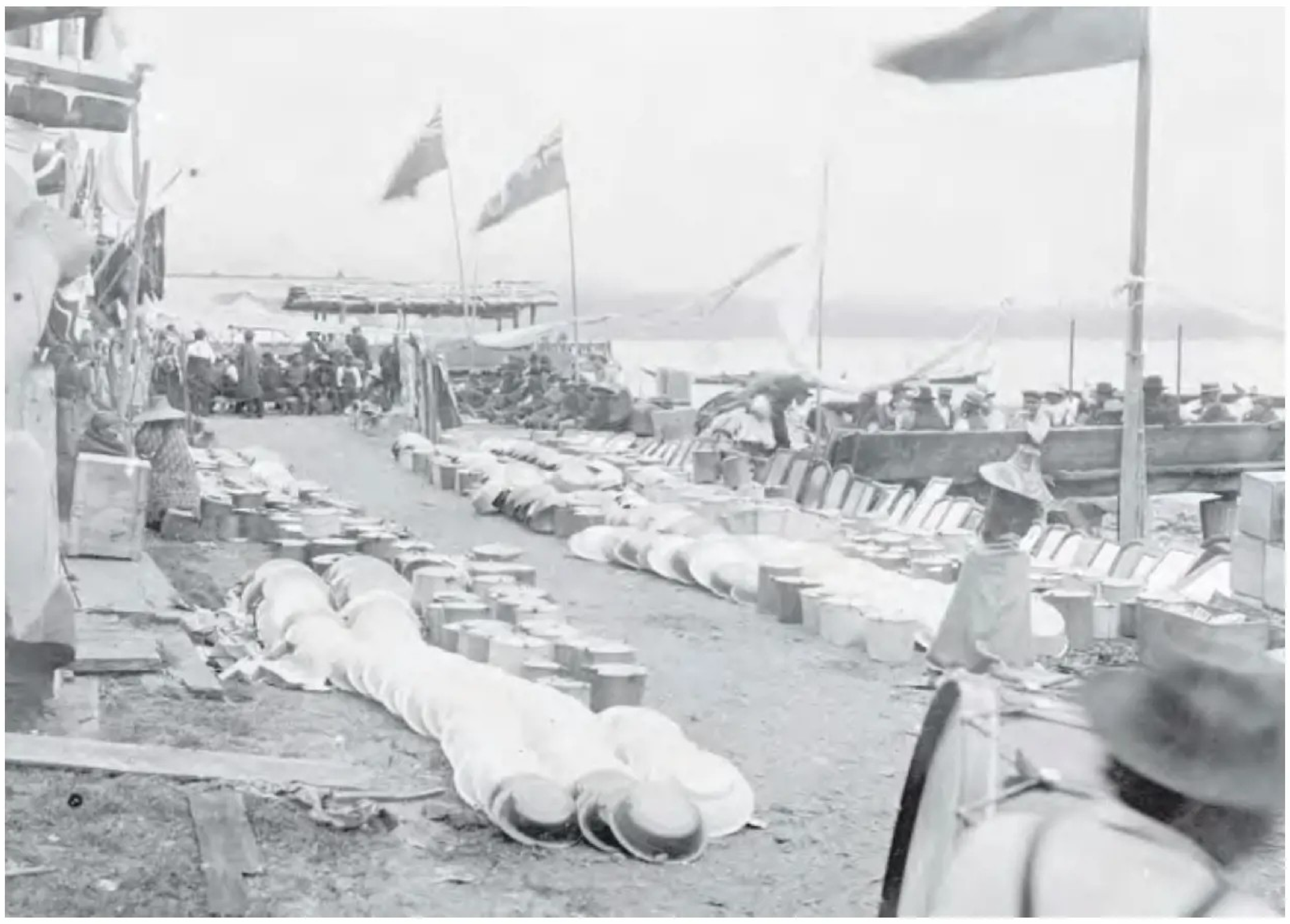

Articles to be given away at a Potlatch in Alert Bay, B.C., between 1897 and 1933.

Connecting the circle

This issue's cover story — "The Pope and the Potlatch" (page 24) — is the culmination of three years of painstaking and sensitive reporting by senior editor Kate Jaimet. Her research took her to the village of 'Yalis (Alert Bay) off the northeast coast of Vancouver Island, connected her to the Vatican and had her digging into countless records and documents archived in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia to trace the journey of First Nations Potlatch regalia to the vaults of the Vatican.

The result is a detailed piece of original investigative journalism that not only sheds light on past practices but also helps connect those events to our contemporary journey of reconciliation. This kind of journalism would not be possible without support for the editorial team from the generous donors to the Editor's Circle.

Established in 2020 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of *Canada's History* magazine, the Editor's Circle supports this publication's second century of storytelling. Integral to our editorial success, donors' contributions empower us to share the complex and diverse stories of Canada's past.

Beyond our exclusive story on the Potlatch regalia, this issue features a comprehensive look at the day-to-day lives of First World War nursing sisters who provided critical care on the ill-fated hospital ship *Llandovery Castle* ("Maritime Massacre," page 16). As the Toronto International Film Festival celebrates its 50th anniversary, we trace the foundational role Canada has played in the Hollywood movie industry (see "The Reel Story," page 36). And as summer starts to wind down, we take you on a nostalgic tour of the remaining one-room schoolhouses dotted across the country ("Class Dismissed," page 44).

We hope you enjoy these and future stories that we're proud to share with you. And, as always, we're grateful for the loyalty and generosity of all the subscribers and donors whose support helps keep history alive.

Jackie Kovacs

CONTRIBUTORS

Robert Gordon Currie wrote "Class Dismissed," a roundup of some of the remaining one-room schoolhouses across the country. Currie studied archaeology and history at the University of Calgary as well as business at the University of Western Ontario. He worked in finance and taught corporate governance, but never forgot what really matters, namely history. He lives in Calgary.

Dianne Dodd wrote "Maritime Massacre." Dodd holds a PhD from Carleton University and recently authored *Our 100 Years: The Canadian Federation of University Women*. She has published in the fields of women's and gender history and is a former historian for Parks Canada. She extends thanks to Allie Vibert Douglas's family and to the staff at Queen's University for sharing their stories, and to Michael Moher for help with the science.

Christopher Guly wrote "The Reel Story." Born in Winnipeg, Guly is an Ottawa-based journalist and a longtime member of the Canadian Parliamentary Press Gallery. He has written and reported for a host of media outlets, including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Guardian*, the BBC, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Ottawa Citizen* and the CBC. He is also a filmmaker whose latest documentary, *Coming Out in Politics*, broadcast in 2023 on OUTtv, streams on Prime Video and AppleTV+.

Kate Jaimet wrote "The Pope and the Potlatch." Jaimet is the outgoing senior editor of *Canada's History* and the new deputy editor of *University Affairs*. Her eclectic 30-year writing career includes episodes as a newspaper journalist, playwright, novelist and magazine freelancer. She extends special thanks to the members of Quatsino First Nation, 'Na̱mgi̱s First Nation and Haida Nation who took the time to share their knowledge with her.

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On the border

Congratulations to Madelaine Drohan for her excellent roundup on the history of American efforts to take over Canada (“Friend or Foe?,” June-July 2025). I was surprised that she did not mention James Polk, who argued for “Manifest Destiny” in the 1844 presidential election, using the slogan “54-40 or Fight” (meaning that Oregon should extend north to the southern tip of the Russian colony of Alaska, cutting Canada off from the Pacific).

Fortunately, once he had the presidency in his pocket, he realized the wisdom of leaving the boundary at 49 degrees as the British had proposed, with a little jiggle around the southern tip of Vancouver Island — where it remains today.

Michael Moore
Toronto

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Sweet memories

The article describing the origins of flapper pie (“Little pie from the prairies,” June-July 2025) brought back a wonderful memory.

As a 13-year-old in 1947, I was staying at my girlfriend’s parents’ summer cottage at Grimsby Beach in Ontario. Her mother served flapper pie for the first time. She received lots of compliments from the family around the table. It was new to me, too, as my own mom made great apple pies. The flapper pie became a big hit. So delicious!

Beryl L. Campbell
Meaford, Ont.

Women’s place

Thanks for the John Lorinc “Home Aid” article (April-May 2025) — very helpful in the ongoing housing crisis. However, is it not time to provide some gender analysis of social issues like housing?

Women were fully engaged working in the munitions industries and provided nursing and other supports to our military during the Second World War. Women only gained the right to obtain mortgages without a male co-signer or permission with the passage of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) in October 1974.

David Kidd
Toronto

I enjoyed “Home Aid,” but I am mystified by the assumption that reverting to a new version of the wartime campaign is the solution.

I grew up during the 1950s and loved our home in the suburbs with its huge lot, parks and schools in walking distance. Every house came with its own tree, whether it be apple, cherry or even a peach. Our neighbourhood was a former working orchard and those lovely trees were what was left of it when development was finished. Turning orchards and farmland into residential neighbourhoods will never happen again.

The main issue with building sufficient housing is access to developable land. Zoning regulations are more restrictive than they ever have been. We have surrounded our cities in green belts, which may be the right thing to do, but it adds massively to the price of land. It takes up to five years from approval in principle to getting shovels in the ground. The combined impacts of excessive immigration and ultra-low interest rates have simply added to housing demand and housing prices.

Kim Boydell
Burlington, Ont.

Errata

Hamar Foster, emeritus professor of law at the University of Victoria, pointed out an oversimplification on question 7 in the “Eh? to Zed Trivia” feature (June-July 2025). The law in place from 1927 to 1951 was aimed at persons, including lawyers, raising money to fund tribal or band claims, especially land claims. It didn’t prevent using lawyers for pursuing individual claims, or as defence counsel in criminal cases.

Also, a few readers were concerned that our April-May 2025 cover depicted American elements in the paratrooper’s uniform. The artist based his work on historical photos and documents, and a military museum checked the preliminary sketch for accuracy. We followed up after hearing reader concerns, and the curator noted that the final artwork differed slightly from the sketch. We apologize for the oversight.

Email comments to editors@CanadasHistory.ca or write to *Canada’s History*, Bryce Hall Main Floor, 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9 Canada. Letters may be edited for length and style.

GETTY/K. GAUGLER/151431986

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

Safer shores

Marking 50 years since Vietnamese refugees began arriving in Canada

Fifty years ago, Canada opened its arms to thousands of Vietnamese fleeing war and persecution. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, more than 60,000 refugees arrived from Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) between 1975 and the early 1980s, often making perilous escapes by sea. Many did not survive. Canadians from coast to coast, including faith and grassroots groups as well as private sponsors, played a pivotal role in resettling families and helping them rebuild their lives.

Prior to 1975, only a few hundred Vietnamese were living in Canada. Today, that community has grown to more than 240,000, contributing richly to every aspect of Canadian life – from business to education to the arts to public service. Their journey stands as one of Canada's proudest humanitarian efforts and a powerful example of successful refugee integration.

In recognition of Canada's contribution to refugee protection, the country received the Nansen Refugee Award by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on Nov. 13, 1986 – the only time an entire country has received such an honour. – *CH staff*

Indochinese refugees make their way to the shore after their small boat crammed with 162 people sank a few metres off the coast of Malaysia.

Camerons Mill covered bridge in New Brunswick.

Making connections

Grassroots efforts to save covered bridges

If you're a fan of covered bridges, you're in luck. In late July and early August, you can join like-minded pontists in New Brunswick for Love Your Covered Bridges Days. The annual celebrations feature live music, picnics and storytelling events held inside or near covered bridges in a variety of communities. They're key in raising awareness about these endangered structures, too.

Also called "kissing bridges" because their enclosed space provides couples with a private place to smooch, Canadian covered bridges were mainly built in 19th-century New Brunswick and Quebec. The structures – traditionally made of timbers and covered with a roof and wood siding to protect the decking from weather damage – are considered by fans to be an essential tie to an area's unique heritage and beauty.

When they eventually need to be replaced or the roads are updated, however, the structures are often swapped out for more prosaic non-covered concrete and steel versions. Today, out of an estimated high of about 1,400, just 140 remain: 81 in Quebec, 57 in New Brunswick, and one each in Ontario and British Columbia, says Ray Boucher, president of the Covered Bridges Conservation Association of New Brunswick.

Covered-bridge enthusiasts are starting to see more success in saving these local icons, through rallies, petitions, letter-writing campaigns and social media. In 2022, Quebec's Red Bridge in Mansfield-et-Pontefract (built in 1898 and, at 152 metres, the second longest in the world) was carefully restored and reopened. The 1935-era Vaughan Creek bridge in St. Martins, N.B., meanwhile, was replaced in an authentic timbered style rather than the proposed steel.

The covered-bridge appeal is enduring. "Many visitors come from places where covered bridges do not exist, so it is something new to see. Others see them as romantic structures enhancing the scenic view," says Boucher. "Enthusiasts will see a covered bridge for what it is – a wonder."

To find out more about Love Your Covered Bridges Days, go to ahnb-apnb.ca/covered-bridges. – *Bonnie Schiedel*

BONNIE SCHIEDEL

Access granted

Set to reopen in 2026, Calgary's Glenbow Museum will boast more public access to art and culture.

A recent $11-million investment from the City of Calgary has helped fuel the final phase of the Glenbow Museum's massive renovation, *Glenbow Reimagined*. The project, underway since 2021, aims to transform the 1970s-era structure into a modern welcoming home for creativity.

At the centre of this reimagining is an expanded visitor experience with increased visibility for its extraordinary collection – the largest public art collection in Western Canada. Key renovation features include new street-level entrances, visitor access to all eight floors and unique back-of-house views of the museum's art storage systems. Glenbow's new Conservation Lab on the eighth floor will even give visitors a behind-the-scenes peek at how conservators preserve and maintain the museum's art and objects.

The new-and-improved Glenbow will house a 13,000-square-foot rooftop terrace designed by renowned American artist Maya Lin; it's envisioned as a community-oriented area where guests can gather in event spaces and sculpture gardens. Meanwhile, Canadian artist Faye HeavyShield has been commissioned to create a work that will be suspended below the new fifth-floor skylight, above the main floor and visible to all through the new vertical gallery.

"These public spaces will add to Calgary's vibrancy as a cultural hub and further allow people to explore the many ways Glenbow adds to the city's cultural fabric," says Glenbow president and CEO Nicholas Bell.

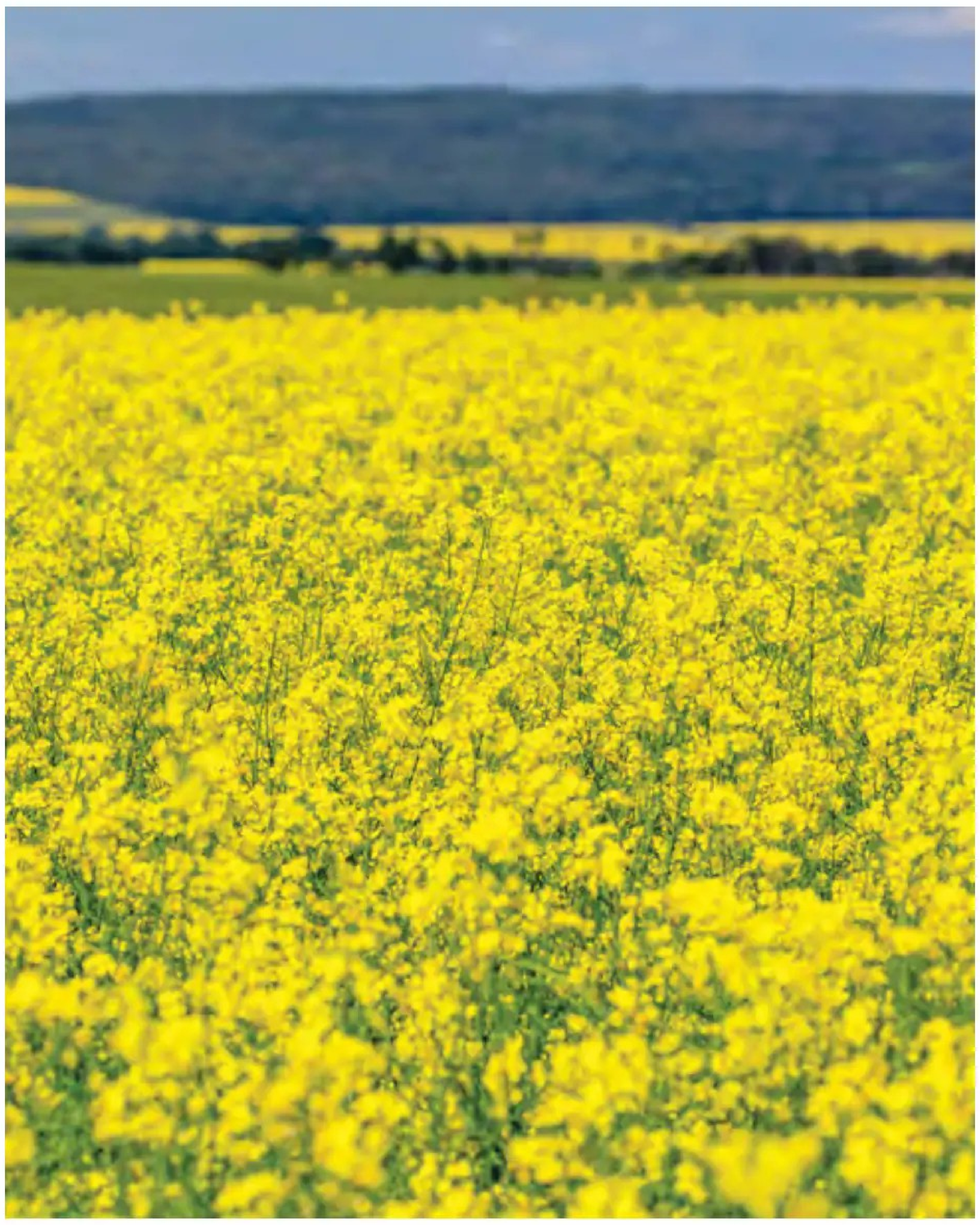
Expanded access to Glenbow's 250,000 works of art and historical artifacts also comes in the form of free admission – forever – thanks to the JR Shaw Free Admission Endowment. That's right, free art for everyone. – *Karen Robock*

An artist's rendering of the reimagined Glenbow Museum.

LEFT: GLENBOW REIMAGINE; RIGHT: ADOBE STOCK

MADE IN CANADA

Oil fields



Canola blooms paint many fields across the country yellow.

Fields of brilliant-yellow canola flowers are at the heart of a Canadian innovation story. After the Second World War, Canada was looking for new crops and a domestic source of edible seed oils. By the 1960s and '70s, Canadian plant scientists were working to create a genetic variation of rapeseed, a centuries-old crop that's closely related to mustard, kale and cabbage. The trouble with rapeseed (besides its problematic name) is that its oil at that time had high levels of a nutritionally undesirable fatty acid called erucic acid. Plus, it was bitter. A cultivar low in both of those traits, dubbed "double low," was the big goal.

Baldur Stefansson of the University of Manitoba and Keith Downey of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Saskatoon are considered the "Fathers of Canola" – sometimes collaborating, sometimes competing – for their pioneering work in creating the eventual new double-low crop. In 1978, it was officially named canola – a mashup of "Canadian" and "oil." Today, not only is it our second-biggest crop (after wheat) but we are also the world's biggest producer of canola. Saskatchewan is by far the largest producer, followed by Alberta and Manitoba, but canola has been grown in every province, so that bright yellow will catch your eye from B.C. to P.E.I. – *Bonnie Schiedel*

Artful dodging

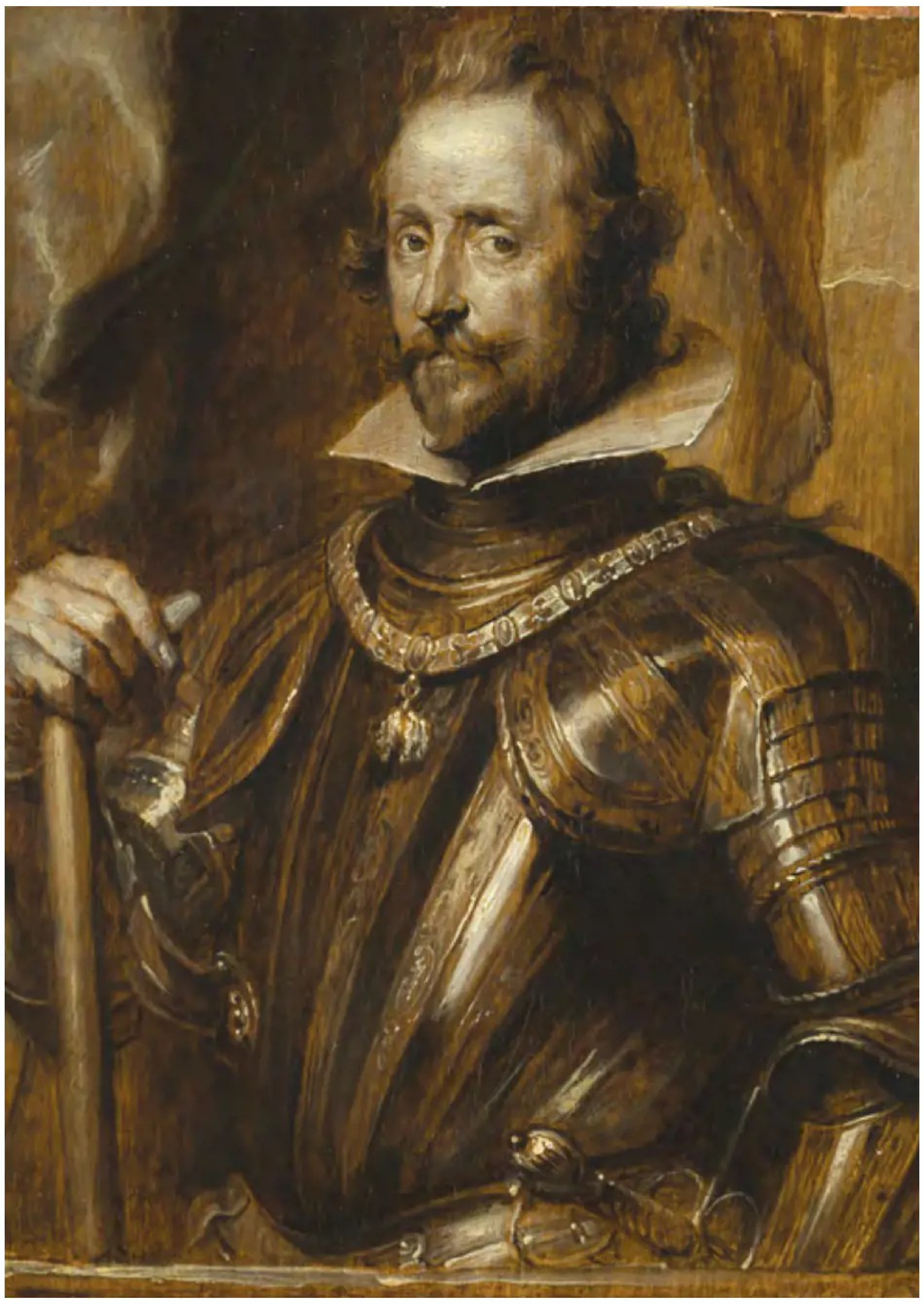
A nearly 400-year-old stolen painting graced the walls of a few locations — including the University of Toronto — before being returned.

How did the artwork of a 17th-century Flemish master wind up at the University of Toronto for more than 20 years? It's complicated.

The artwork in question — *The Portrait of Wolfgang Wilhelm of Pfalz-Neuburg* — is an oil-painted sketch by Anthony van Dyck that dates to the 1680s. For most of its life, the portrait had been part of the family collection of Mary Montagu Douglas Scott, Duchess of Buccleuch and Queensberry, and was kept at Boughton House, the family home in Northamptonshire, in England's East Midlands.

In 1957, the duchess happened to visit the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. One of the van Dyck paintings there, she noted, was very similar to one at Boughton House. Soon, she realized theirs was missing, initiating investigations to find out how the painting reached America.

At the time of the duchess's visit, van Dyck's grisaille was owned and had been lent to the museum by Lillian Malcove, a private collector. Though a New Yorker, Malcove spent her formative years in Winnipeg after her family immigrated there from Russia in 1905, potentially explaining why she chose to bequeath her art collection to U of T.



The Portrait of Wolfgang Wilhelm of Pfalz-Neuburg, an oil-painted sketch by Dutch master Anthony van Dyck, was lost for decades.

THE BUCCLEUCH COLLECTIONS/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

The painting itself had previously been purchased by two other New York City art collectors, the first of whom had bought it from Christie's auction house in New York in 1954. The seller was Leonard Gerald Gwynne Ramsey, editor of *Connoisseur,* a reputed art magazine of the time.

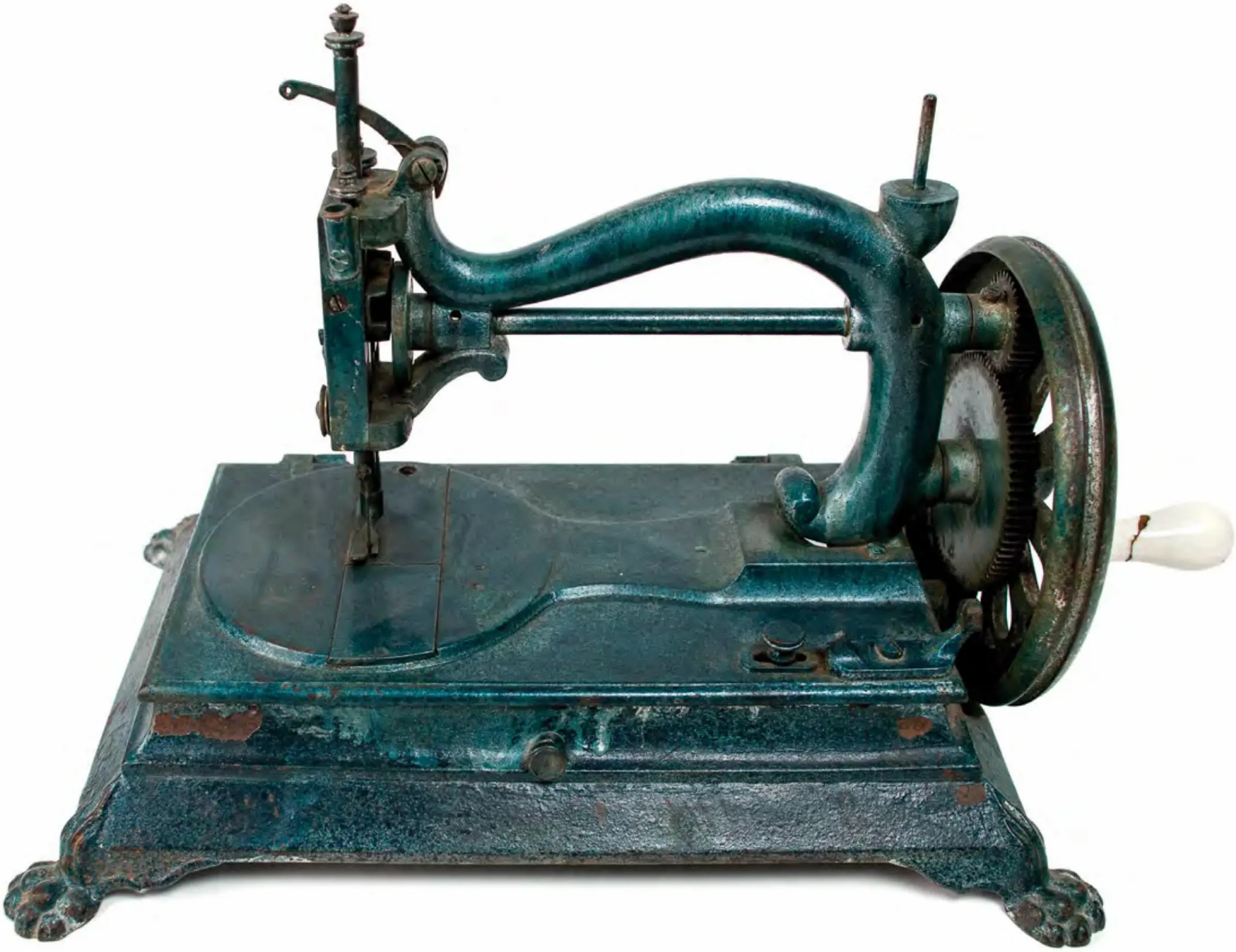
Ramsey visited Boughton House in 1951 with a photographer for an article about the family's collection. Interestingly, the story didn't mention the paintings. As investigations ensued, Sir Alec Martin, Christie's managing director, wrote to Ramsey, asking how he acquired the painting. Ramsey claimed he'd bought it at an open country market in Hertfordshire for 10 shillings — following the suggestion of a then-deceased art collector to look for quality paintings there.

But the evidence caught up to Ramsey's lies quickly. In a 1953 letter to art dealer and historian Ludwig Goldscheider, Ramsey detailed his intentions to sell two van Dyck paintings to buy curtains for his house. Goldscheider gave Ramsey a certificate for selling the painting at Christie's, calling it "a fine original and in perfect state."

When questioned, Ramsey and Goldscheider insisted that the painting sold at Christie's was not "the same quality as those in the Buccleuch Collection." However, the Fogg had insured the piece for $9,000 — testifying to its quality and origin. Plus, Ramsey couldn't prove he got his painting before the Buccleuchs lost theirs.

The piece was returned to Malcove after the dispute arose. Following her death in 1981, it stayed at the University of Toronto until a decade-long investigation by art historian Meredith H. Gale, ending in 2021, proved how it was stolen. The grisaille was finally returned to the Duke of Buccleuch in 2024.

Ramsey's theft hid well, perhaps, as Gale has suggested, because of "the audacity of a thief cloaked in the respectability of expertise." *— Aadya Arora*



ARTIFACT FROM THE MANITOBA MUSEUM (HBC 59-45) /
PHOTO BY ANDREW WORKMAN

Moving the needle

Tales and treasures from the rich legacy of the Hudson's Bay Company

Hand-cranked sewing machines enjoyed a relatively short-lived popularity. After appearing in the late 19th century, they were soon surpassed by treadle varieties that were mechanically operated by a foot pedal.

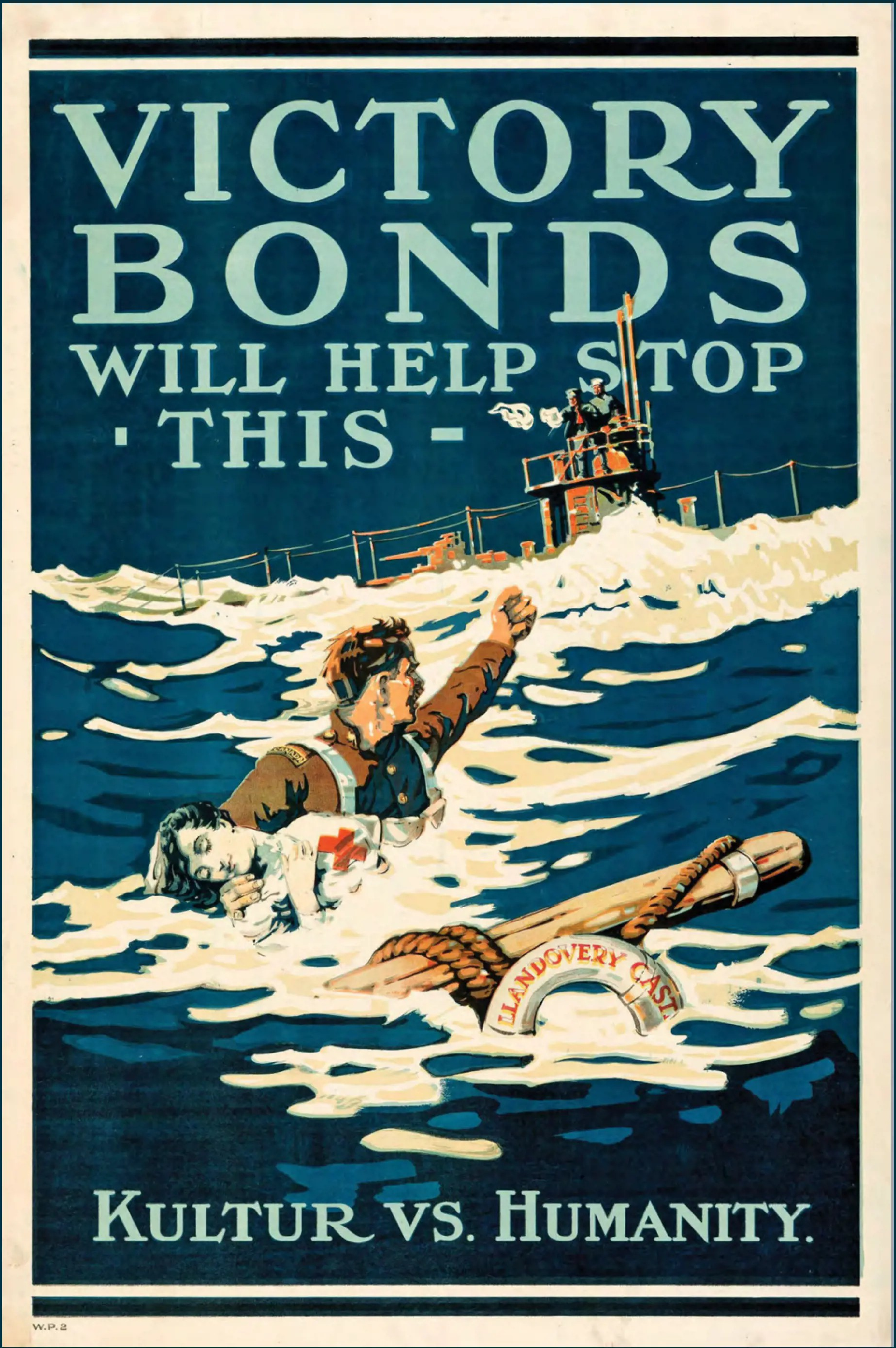
The perk of the hand crank was that it provided additional control, regardless of leaving only one hand free to move the fabric. Those of us with a lead foot can attest to the challenges of using a sensitive pedal when sewing!

This sewing machine is likely from the 1880s or 1890s and was apparently used at Lower Fort Garry, north of Winnipeg, before making its way into the HBC Museum Collection in 1959.

Despite its age, it would probably still function today after a bit of cleaning and a tune-up.

— Amelia Fay, curator of anthropology and the HBC Collection at the Manitoba Museum

The Beaver magazine (now *Canada's History*) was originally founded as a Hudson's Bay Company publication in 1920. To read stories from past issues, go to **CanadasHistoryArchive.ca**. To explore the history of the Hudson's Bay Company, follow HBC's X and Instagram feeds at **@HBCHeritage.**


VICTORY BONDS
WILL HELP STOP
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CANADA
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MARITIME MASSACRE

Nursing sisters and Canada's deadliest naval disaster of the First World War

by Dianne Dodd

"DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANY HOPE FOR US?" were the last words spoken by Matron Margaret Marjory (Pearl) Fraser to Sgt. Arthur Knight, who had tried to shepherd Lifeboat No. 5 to safety.

"No," he admitted, before the whirlpool created by the sinking hospital ship HMHS *Llandovery Castle* capsized their lifeboat, drowning her, 13 other nursing sisters and eight crew members. Ten minutes earlier, on June 27, 1918, Germany's *U-86* had torpedoed the ship off the coast of Ireland.

The loss of the *Llandovery Castle* was the worst Canadian maritime disaster of the Great War, claiming the lives of 234 crew, medical officers and other ranks and nursing sisters. Knight, one of only 24 survivors, heaped praise on the nurses, noting he never heard a complaint or cry for help as they faced certain death. Identifying with the soldiers they cared for, these practical, hardworking professionals and proud officers have been dubbed "Sister Soldiers" by historian Cynthia Toman in her book *Sister Soldiers of the Great War*.

Pearl Fraser was one of some 61 nursing sister casualties of the First World War. Including the *Llandovery Castle* victims, 21 died as a direct result of enemy attacks; another third from pneumonia or influenza, mostly caused by the devastating 1918 Influenza Pandemic; and the rest from other illnesses. Matron Fraser, in charge of the *Llandovery Castle* nurses, exemplifies the

Left: A 1918 Canadian Victory Bonds propaganda poster of the sinking of the HMHS *Llandovery Castle*. The nursing sister depicted is not wearing the standard "bluebird" uniform. See page 23 for more.

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experiences not only of the Canadian nursing sisters who died but also of all 2,845 who served overseas and in Canada. Most nursing sisters were well educated, having graduated from a three-year nursing program, and older than many of the men they cared for. Toman notes that some had also attended university.

Fraser graduated from the Lady Stanley Institute for Trained Nurses in Ottawa in 1908, but little else is known of her early career. The Canadian Army Medical Corps (CAMC) regulations required each nursing sister to be a graduate nurse, unmarried, of high moral character and between the ages of 21 and 38 at enlistment. Fraser came from a prominent family; her father was Duncan Cameron Fraser, Nova Scotia's lieutenant-governor from 1906 until his untimely death in 1910. Shortly after war was declared, Pearl enlisted, as did her younger brother Alistair and their cousins, fellow nursing sister Harriet and Wendell Steward Graham.

Like soldiers, nurses were motivated to enlist for reasons that included duty to country and financial security. But a sense of adventure was often evident. Fraser's surviving wartime diary (1914-15) conveys her excitement as she travelled with the first contingent. She recorded the names of the ships in the convoy and called them "a glorious sight this moonlight [*sic*] night. Alastair [*sic*] on *Ruthenia*. Wendell on *Zealand* [*sic*]. Moosejaw [*sic*] boys on *Royal Edward* directly in front." She also recalled the excitement caused when a sailor fell off the *Royal Edward*, noting, "someone had thrown several life buoys to him" and "the other ships closed in around us," and "we felt he was comparatively safe [the] only fear being that he might become 'exhausted' from cold." The half-hour it took to get him back on board was clear proof to Fraser that "his swimming saved his life." She also reported on-board card games with fellow officers, an "excellent concert in 2nd cabin at night," a church service and lectures.

After landing in England, Fraser went with the nursing sisters to St Thomas' Hospital in London, where Florence Nightingale had founded the first modern school of nursing in 1860. Fraser shopped for clothes and supplies and took in the sights. Evenings were filled with plays and days with stops at the Criterion Restaurant, famous for suffragist teas and a reference in a Sherlock Holmes novel. Likely due to the distinctive Canadian nursing uniform that earned them the nickname "bluebirds," Fraser observed that "people take great delight in looking at us. Our only way of getting them to stop is to look at their big feet until they are simply forced to lower their eyes."

Above: Matron Margaret Marjory (Pearl) Fraser

FWW VETERANS OF GUYSBOROUGH COUNTY

LIKE SOLDIERS, NURSES WERE MOTIVATED TO ENLIST FOR REASONS THAT INCLUDED DUTY TO COUNTRY AND FINANCIAL SECURITY.

Top: (L to R) Nursing sisters Mowat, McNichol and Guillbride (first names not available).

Above: Canadian soldiers on board HMHS *Llandovery Castle*, May 1918.

TOP: VIMY FOUNDATION. BOTTOM: CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM

NURSES IN THE GREAT WAR

Nursing sisters were initially granted the relative rank of lieutenant. Although they could rise in rank with promotions — Matron-in-Chief Margaret Macdonald, for example, held the rank of major — women could serve only as nursing sisters, even if they were physicians. Rank afforded nurses some significant privileges, but it was relative, meaning that their authority was limited to the supervision of orderlies (ranked below them) and nurses in the unit and patients. This kept nurses firmly under military command, unlike their counterparts in the British and American forces, who served in auxiliary forces headed by nurse matrons.

CAMC nurses played an integral role in ensuring that the Great War would be the first in modern history to have more Canadian soldiers die of enemy action than of disease. According to Desmond Morton's book *When Your Number's Up*, more than 90 per cent of Canadian soldiers who reached a casualty clearing station survived their injuries. CAMC nurses were skilled surgical assistants; kept vigilant watch over the patients' changing condition; cleansed and bandaged wounds; administered medications; and fed and bathed soldiers. Nursing sisters did all this in the physically and emotionally challenging environment of warfare. They dealt with horrific injuries, many of which were relatively new and little understood: shrapnel that tore bodies to pieces, chlorine gas poisoning that damaged lungs, trench foot that could lead to amputation, tetanus, shell shock and the horrors of gas gangrene with its ominous odour. And, in an era that predated the golden age of antibiotic development, nurses fought a relentless battle against infection, using both older methods such as poultices and newly developed wound-irrigation techniques. It was a battle that saved many lives.

CAMC medical units were absorbed into the British system, which was organized along battle lines, with field ambulances accompanying the troops. Stretcher bearers carried wounded soldiers to regimental aid posts, where medical officers did assessments, administered morphine and bandaged wounds. Some patients were eventually sent to hospitals farther from the front, using an extensive network of ambulances, trains and ships.

The evolving military medical system grew as the war advanced. Fraser's first major assignment as a nursing sister was to France, with No. 2 Canadian Stationary Hospital, which was established at the luxurious Hôtel du Golf, near Étaples-sur-Mer, with 300 beds. But as the battle settled into trench warfare and casualties mounted, this hospital was enlarged and moved to Outreau (near Boulogne-sur-Mer) in the fall of 1915. More CAMC hospitals, most organized by university medical schools, were added throughout 1915 and 1916. By 1918, the CAMC managed 16 general and 10 stationary hospitals (each typically having 1,000 beds or more), 72 nursing sisters, 30 medical officers and 205 other ranks. As well, they operated four casualty clearing stations. Canada also used five hospital ships, of which *Llandovery Castle* was one. These ships brought home discharged soldiers and those deemed "medically unfit" for further service. Nurses worked at many of these sites.

"WE HAVEN'T A MINUTE TO OURSELVES AND OUR MINDS ARE SO MUCH ON OUR WORK AND OUR POOR BOYS. WE CAN NEITHER THINK NOR TALK OF ANYTHING ELSE."

A NURSE'S WARTIME EXPERIENCE

The No. 2 Canadian Stationary Hospital's first convoy of 115 patients arrived on Dec. 4, 1914, "suffering mostly from swollen feet [trench foot], frost bite, and minor gunshot wounds," Fraser noted in her diary. In his book *First World War Honour Roll of Guysborough County, Nova Scotia Vol. 1*, historian Bruce F. MacDonald writes that in a letter published later in a Moose Jaw newspaper, Fraser described treating Canadians wounded in the Second Battle of Ypres who had experienced the devastating chlorine gas attack at St. Julien, Belgium, on April 24, 1915.

Even when the cases weren't severe, the work could be exhausting. According to MacDonald's book, Fraser noted: "Last night [April 26, 1915] we were asleep when at 1 a.m. an overflow of 300 arrived, not bad cases, but up we had to get, and it was pathetic. Most of them were nearly starved.… They were fed and dressed and places made for them to sleep over night before we again laid our own heads to rest."

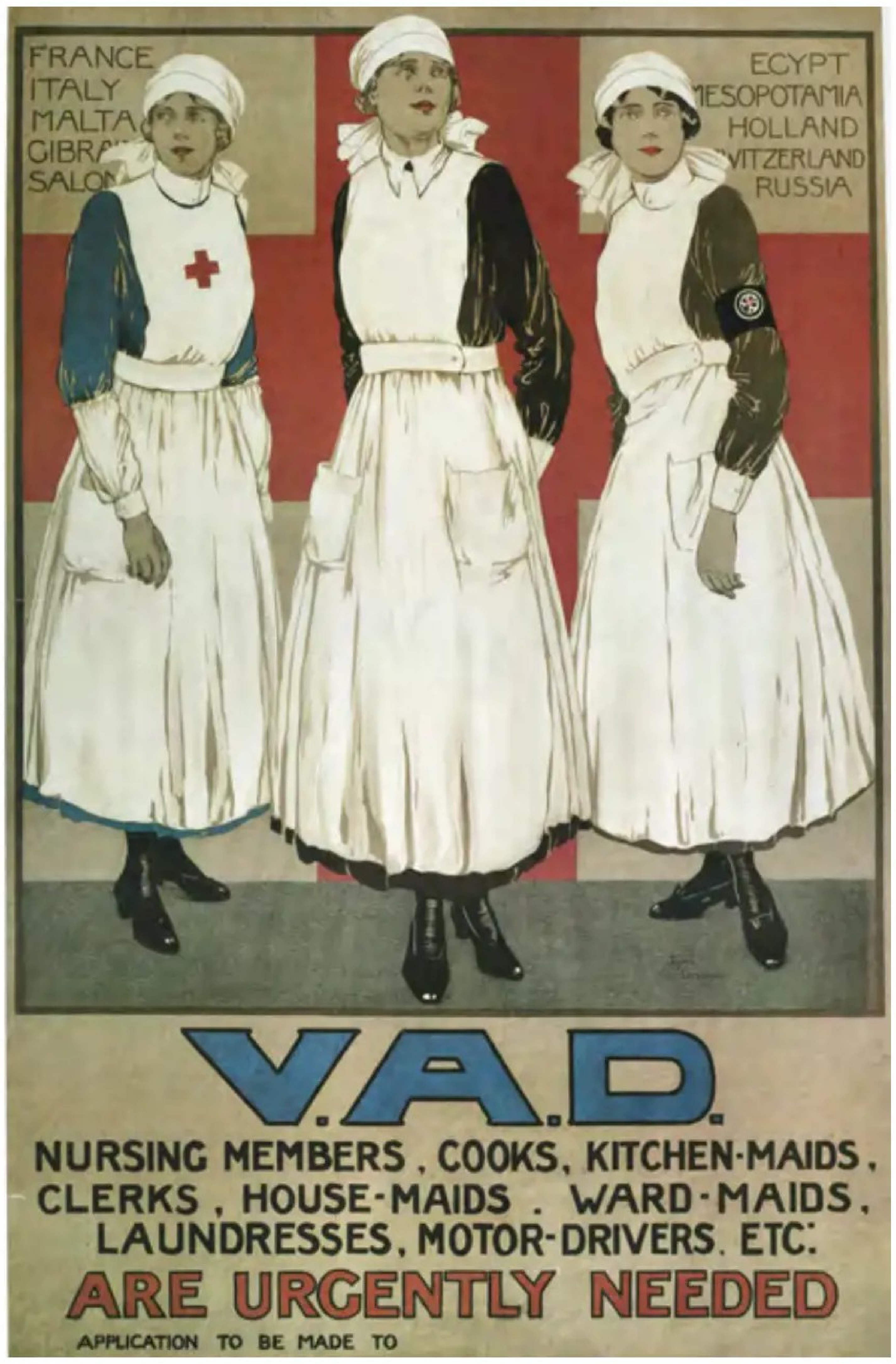
MacDonald notes that she also wrote, "We haven't a minute to ourselves and our minds are so much on our work and our poor boys. We can neither think nor talk of anything else." Sometimes, the work resembled an assembly line; for example, on a day when 300 or 400 wounded arrived, "Nursing is now out of the question; all we do is receive, dress, get them bathed, and fed, and then pass them on." Every soldier who could be moved was sent via hospital ships to England.

Casualty clearing stations, some of them employing new blood-transfusion techniques developed during the war, provided surgical facilities near the front line and reduced the need to move patients long distances. They were found to improve survival rates. Fraser reported for duty at the No. 2 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station (No. 2 CCS) in February 1916. Still, there were misgivings about sending women close to the front. However, nursing sisters expressed a willingness to serve wherever they were needed, and a CCS assignment was considered a privilege, one that suggested a nurse was deemed competent to do difficult work under difficult conditions.

While hospital work could be exhausting, there were quiet periods between engagements when nurses had time to socialize and travel. Nurses helped organize Christmas parties and other events. Staff or convalescent patients or both usually provided entertainment for these — indeed, a sizable hospital could often put together a small orchestra or choir, or even stage a play. Friendships with other nursing sisters did much to sustain them through good times and bad.

MANY NURSES SUFFERED FROM A MENTAL ILLNESS SIMILAR TO PTSD.

Fraser spent her first Christmas overseas with her brother and cousins in what local Nova Scotia historian James M. Cameron called "a circumvention of military security and red tape which was a unique accomplishment." The two men were granted leave from their units in England, applied to the French Consulate for visas and travelled by ferry to Boulogne, where Fraser and her cousin Harriet met them in an ambulance. In December of 1915 and 1916, Fraser received leaves of absence of five days and two weeks, respectively.


FRANCE
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NURSING MEMBERS, COOKS, KITCHEN-MAIDS, CLERKS, HOUSE-MAIDS. WARD-MAIDS, LAUNDRESSES, MOTOR-DRIVERS, ETC.
ARE URGENTLY NEEDED
APPLICATION TO BE MADE TO

Nurses were very much in demand, as this recruiting poster for the Voluntary Aid Detachments shows.

CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM/19920143-009

Wartime nurses suffered emotional trauma from witnessing horrible injuries, knowing that some patients would never fully recover, experiencing the frustration of realizing they could offer little help, and comforting the dying. Many viewed soldiers with maternal or sisterly affection, and dismissed their own hardships in comparison with their "boys." Nursing sisters wrote letters home for soldiers, sometimes informing a mother or wife of a deceased soldier's last words; attended funerals; and placed flowers on the graves of those they lost.

Working conditions also took a toll. The unit diary of No. 2 CCS for Feb. 20, 1916, for example, noted "intense bombardment heard from the front all day long. Although 20 miles or more away our buildings shook and windows rattled."

Even some of those serving in hospitals farther from the front often worked in tent wards or were housed in tents and huts; they offered minimal protection from the cold, rain and winds, which sometimes grew strong enough to blow down tents.

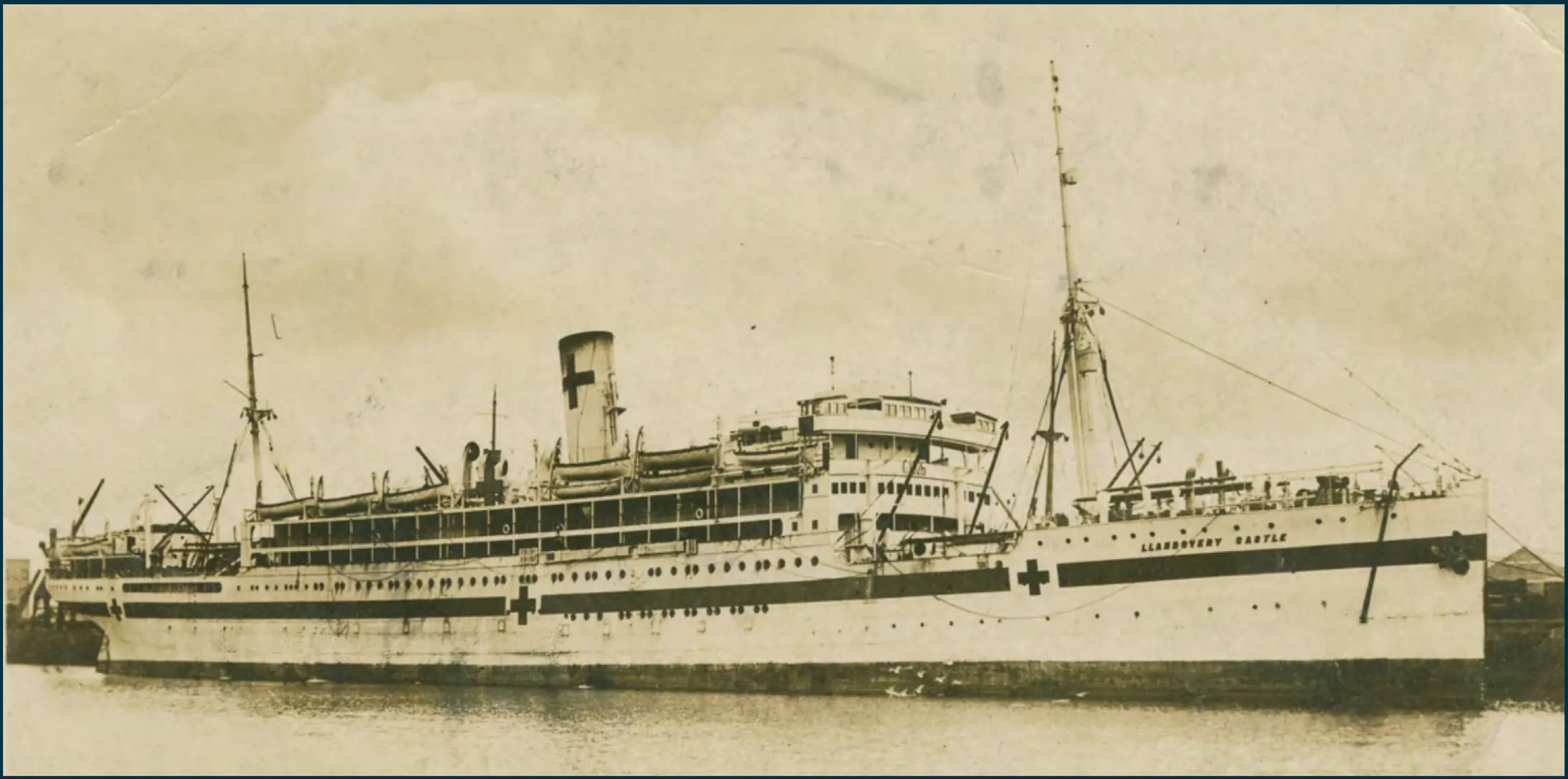
Many of the 14 nurses aboard *Llandovery Castle* had, like Fraser, served since the first few months of the war and were suffering from various health ailments themselves, including "neurasthenia" (exhaustion), a mental illness similar to PTSD. Overworked nurses were granted sick leave or assigned to hospital ships where the work was considered light. On the trip from England to Canada, nurses cared for convalescent patients, then returned with just CAMC members and crew.

In 1917, according to MacDonald's book, after having served 2½ years on the continent, Fraser was reassigned to HMHS *Letitia*, then transferred that July to King's Canadian Red Cross Hospital, Bushy Park, London, where she became nurse-in-charge. Then, in November 1917, Fraser was transferred back to hospital-ship duty, this time to HMHS *Araguaya*. On March 4, 1918, her youngest brother, Laurier, who had enlisted in 1916, was killed in action in France. Fraser left for a month's sick leave in April 1918 with family in Nova Scotia.

She reported back for duty on May 17, 1918, having been appointed matron on *Llandovery Castle* — only to be killed a little over a month later. If Fraser continued her wartime diary beyond 1915, her family believes it was likely lost at sea, so we'll never know her perspectives on the later years of her service.

MacDonald believes that Fraser and her colleagues would want to be remembered as women who "selflessly responded to their country's call to service in a time of need," adding that they contributed "to the changes in women's roles that occurred during the interwar years. While some eventually married and raised families after their discharge, others devoted their lives to nursing in a variety of capacities — public and military hospitals, public health and private nursing."

Indeed, nursing, then still a relatively young profession, rose in status thanks to these women, as symbolized in Prime Minister Robert Borden's extension of the right to vote to nursing sisters (along with the female relatives of servicemen) in 1917. While the move was also a political ploy to shore up support for his party and conscription, it nonetheless recognized nurses' wartime service.



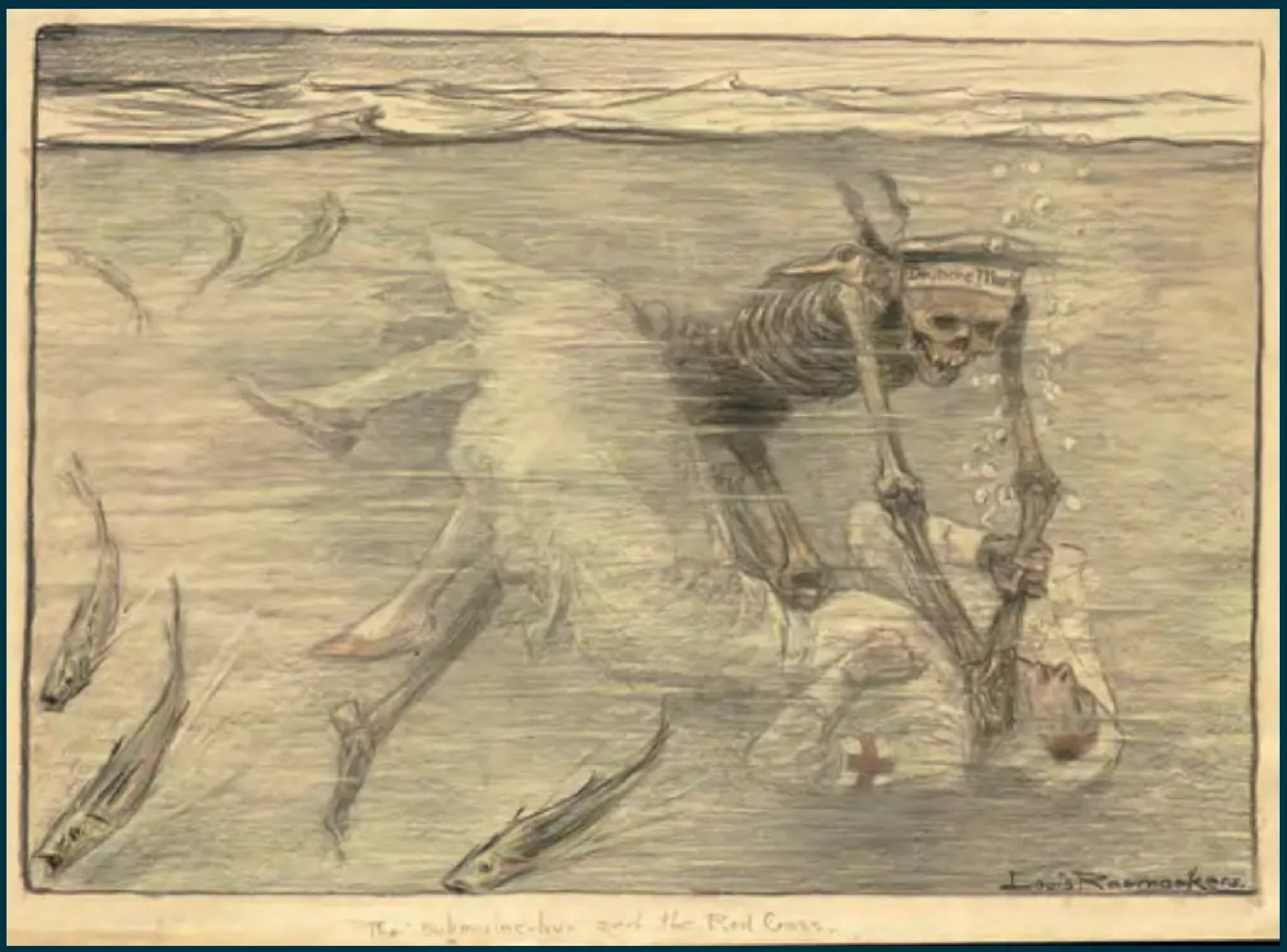
THE SINKING OF HMHS *LLANDOVERY CASTLE*

It is often said that truth is the first casualty of war. Admittedly, the German submarine *U-86*'s commander, Helmut Patzig, and his crew gave the Allied propaganda machine plenty of fodder when he managed to hit the hospital ship *Llandovery Castle* in its engine room, extinguishing all the lights immediately, preventing a distress call and sinking it within 10 minutes. Several lifeboats were launched and many of those that made it off the ship were rammed into and fired on, as if to destroy any evidence of their actions. Patzig accused survivors of carrying ammunition and harbouring American pilots.

Wartime posters focused most of their indignation on the 14 nurses. In a Victory Bonds poster, readers are told that buying the bonds would help stop this atrocity, showing a nurse lying helplessly in the arms of her male rescuer (see page 16). Interestingly, she is not wearing her bluebird uniform but one sporting a Red Cross, presumably meant to symbolize Allied outrage over the targeting of a well-lit hospital ship in contravention of the Hague Convention. The outrage was perhaps a bit disingenuous, given that this was certainly not the first German U-boat attack on a hospital ship — they occurred with increasing frequency by 1917.

The title of the American poster "Spurlos Versenkt" refers to an alleged German policy (literally, "sunk without a trace"). The poster shows women in a lifeboat under attack, although no nursing sister had died that way. One Canadian officer allegedly told his troops to use "Llandovery Castle" as a battle cry during the Battle of Amiens in August 1918, which launched "Canada's Hundred Days," a series of offensives that closed out the war with a victory that cost many lives.

We know little of what the nurses thought of these depictions. But nursing sisters knew the risks they took in boarding a hospital ship or, for that matter, working in a casualty clearing station, and accepted them as part of their duty as military officers.


Louis Raemaekers
The submarine-hun and the Red Cross.

Top: HMHS *Llandovery Castle*.
Above: Louis Raemaekers' 1918 chalk drawing depicting a skeletal German soldier murdering a nursing sister.

TOP: NOVA SCOTIA ARCHIVES PHOTO COLLECTION. BOTTOM: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

THE POPE *and the* POTLATCH

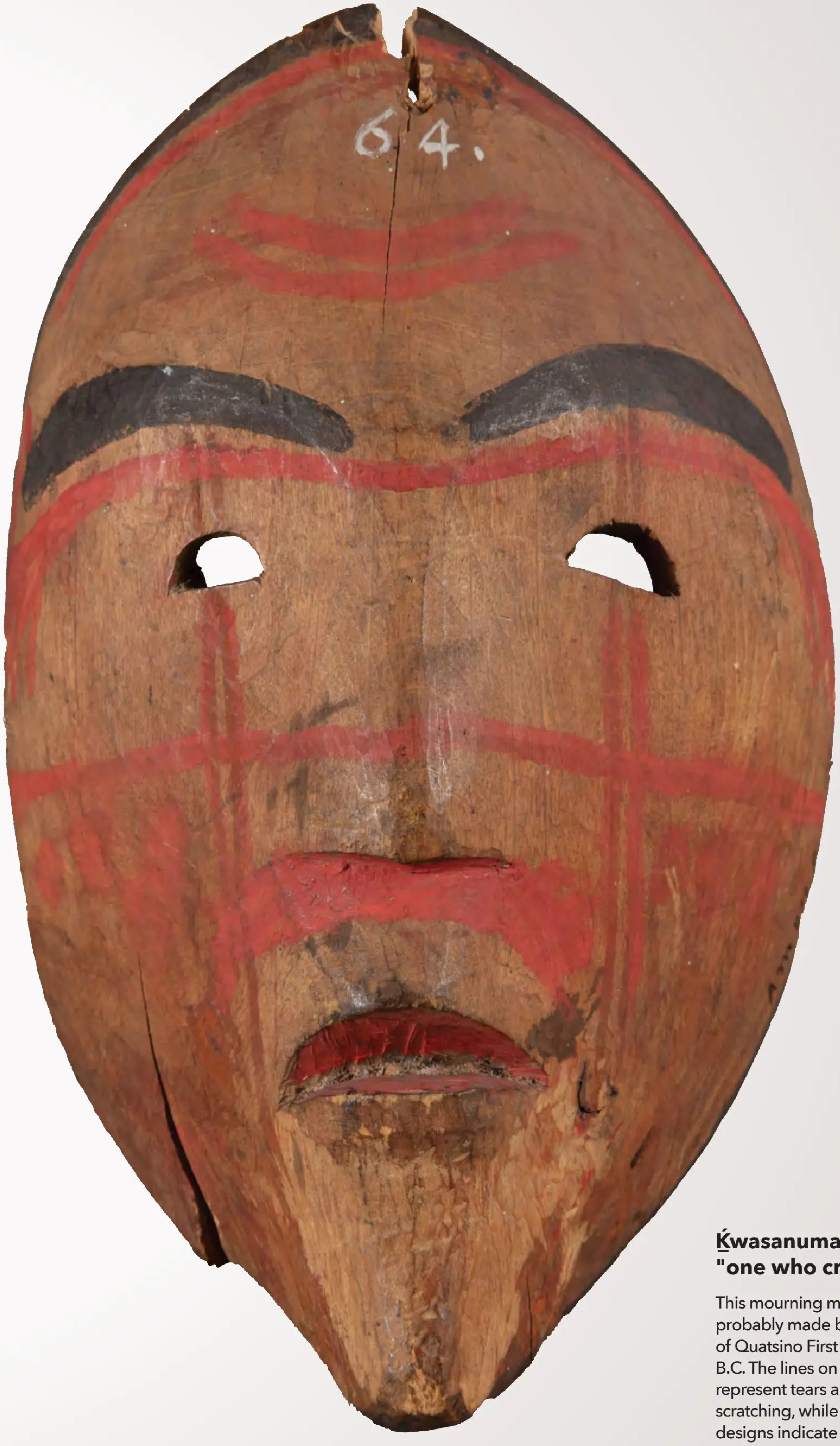
Century-old First Nations regalia lies in the vaults of the Vatican. Some say it’s time to bring it home.

by Kate Jaimet

Somewhere in the Vatican, a mask is crying. Carved of wood, the century-old mourning mask from the Pacific Northwest Coast may once have been worn at a Potlatch by a Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw noblewoman, grieving the death of a family member. Red lines, representing tears, streak down from its empty eye sockets. Crossing them is a second set of lines whose red colour symbolizes blood.

“These represent scratches, showing their pain,” says Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw master carver Wayne Alfred, as he studies a photograph of the mask. He is a member of the ‘Na̱mg̱is First Nation in the community of ‘Ya̱lis on Cormorant Island, tucked amid the misty channels and deep, forested inlets between northern Vancouver Island and the British Columbia coast. “Physical pain is nothing compared to that kind of pain, when you lose somebody. That’s when you scratch and bite.”

A century ago, the mask was shipped to Rome for the 1925 Pontifical Missionary Exposition — a monumental fair where 100,000 objects, many of them made by Indigenous people, were collected from around the world and displayed in a series of pavilions, all, in the words of Pope Pius XI, “for the honour and glory of God … whose Name, Kingdom, and glory the missions carry to the utmost ends of the earth.”



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Ḵ́wasanuma, "one who cries"

This mourning mask was probably made by a carver of Quatsino First Nation in B.C. The lines on the cheeks represent tears and facial scratching, while the other designs indicate nobility.

In B.C., Catholic Oblate missionaries sent at least three full crates to the exposition. Although no complete list of their contents exists, research reveals that they included — in addition to the mourning mask — a sun or star mask (see page 28), a portrait mask of a woman (this page), a “fool dancer” mask (page 31), and a Chief's ceremonial raven rattle (page 34).

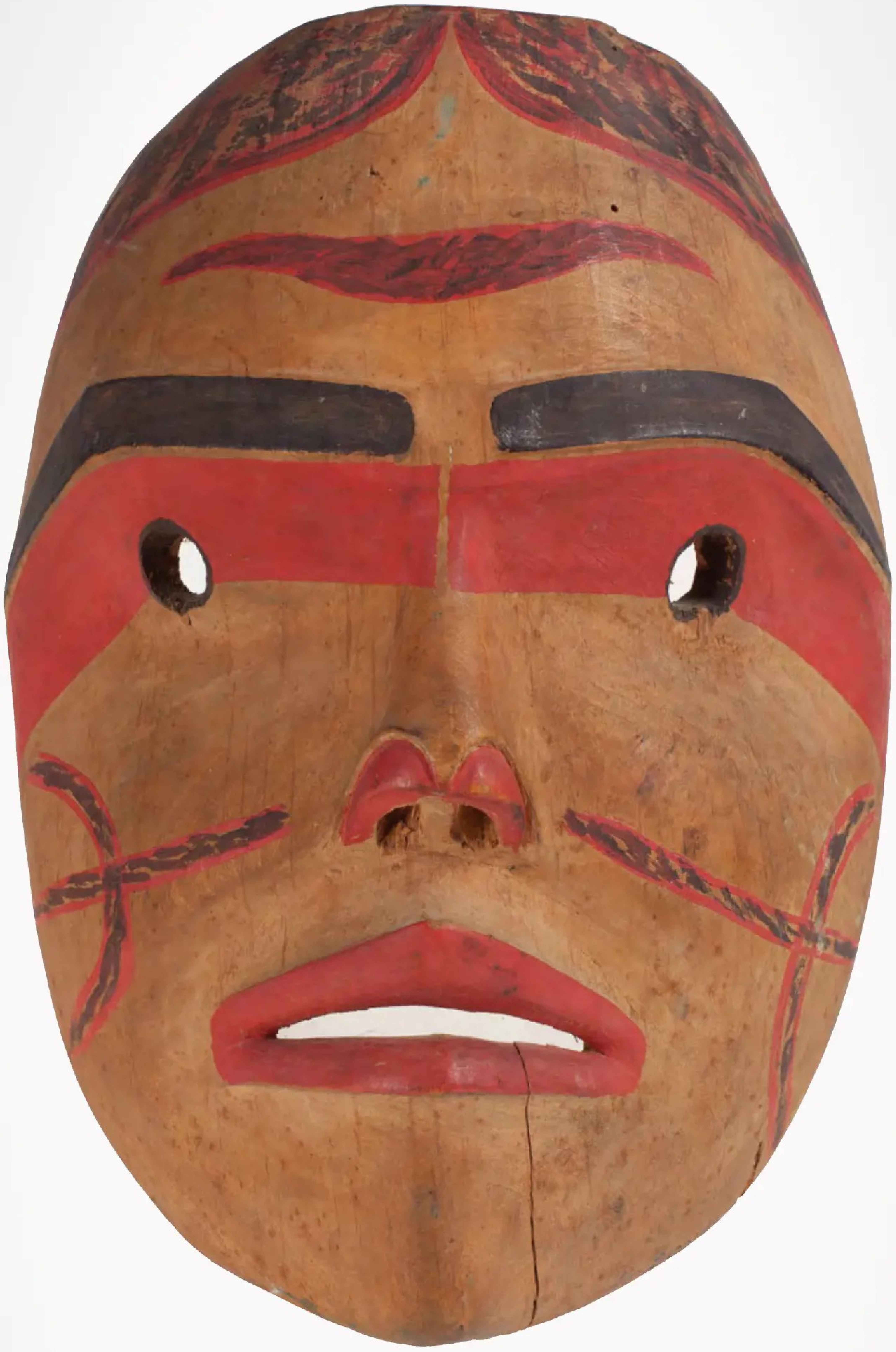
Today, these Potlatch masks and rattle still reside in the Vatican Ethnological Museum *Anima Mundi*. But on the Pacific Northwest Coast, people like Wayne Alfred and his mother, 86-year-old Pauline Alfred, question the moral right of the Catholic Church to possess these ancestral treasures.

“I don’t think they should be there,” says Pauline, sitting amid a display of ceremonial dancing masks and traditional regalia in the U’mista Cultural Centre in ‘Ya̱lis. “Religion really killed us. The Catholics came here first, then the Anglicans. They came here and invaded us.”

Just outside the centre, Pauline’s great-grandchildren play in a field where St. Michael’s Indian Residential School once stood — the school that she was forced to attend from the age of six. Although St. Michael’s was overseen by Anglicans, Catholic missionaries established and ran 11 similar residential schools in B.C.

“They made residential schools so we would forget our culture. We were not allowed to dance. We were not allowed to sing. We were not allowed to talk,” she says. “They wanted us to be white.”

According to the Vatican’s online catalogue, the Potlatch masks and rattle were “gift[s] of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate on the occasion of the Vatican Missionary Exposition.” The evidence, however, reveals a far more complex story: Passing through the hands of carvers, Chiefs, collectors, ethnologists, priests and museum officials, the masks and rattle belong to a larger history of trade, evangelization, cultural suppression and resistance among the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest Coast.



Portrait mask of a woman

This mask’s ovoid shape and artistic style hint at an origin among the Klaskino – one of five Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw tribes that make up Quatsino First Nation on northwest Vancouver Island, says Irwin Price, Traditional Use Study coordinator of Quatsino First Nation. “The deep cultural and spiritual significance of these masks is evident, and their potential return is vital to our community’s ongoing cultural revitalization,” he says.

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The Potlatch

For countless generations, the Potlatch has been a cultural linchpin among the peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast. It's a way for Chiefs to ensure and augment their status by distributing money and valuables; a forum for passing on oral history; an opportunity to mourn the dead; a time to name new babies; and an occasion to seal marriages between noble families, transmitting valuable dowries and securing territorial and trade alliances. Celebrated by coastal First Nations including the Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw, Nuxalk, Heiltsuk, Haida, Tsimshian, Tlingit and others, Potlatches gather Chiefs and community members in a communal Big House — traditionally, the Chief’s home — to witness important events.

“Potlatches are mostly memorial,” says Pauline Alfred. “Someone died and then, three or four years later, you had a memorial Potlatch for the loved one. And when the girls became young ladies, they threw a feast.”

The mourning mask in the Vatican collection — called a *ḵ̓wasanuma* in Kwak̓wala, meaning “one who cries” — was used “in mourning-for-the-dead ceremonies that are the beginning of Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw Potlatches, as we recognize death and those in mourning in order to move forward and ceremonially celebrate life,” says Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw artist William Wasden Jr. The other masks held by the Vatican would have been worn by Potlatch dancers to re-enact stories from oral history and ancient legend.

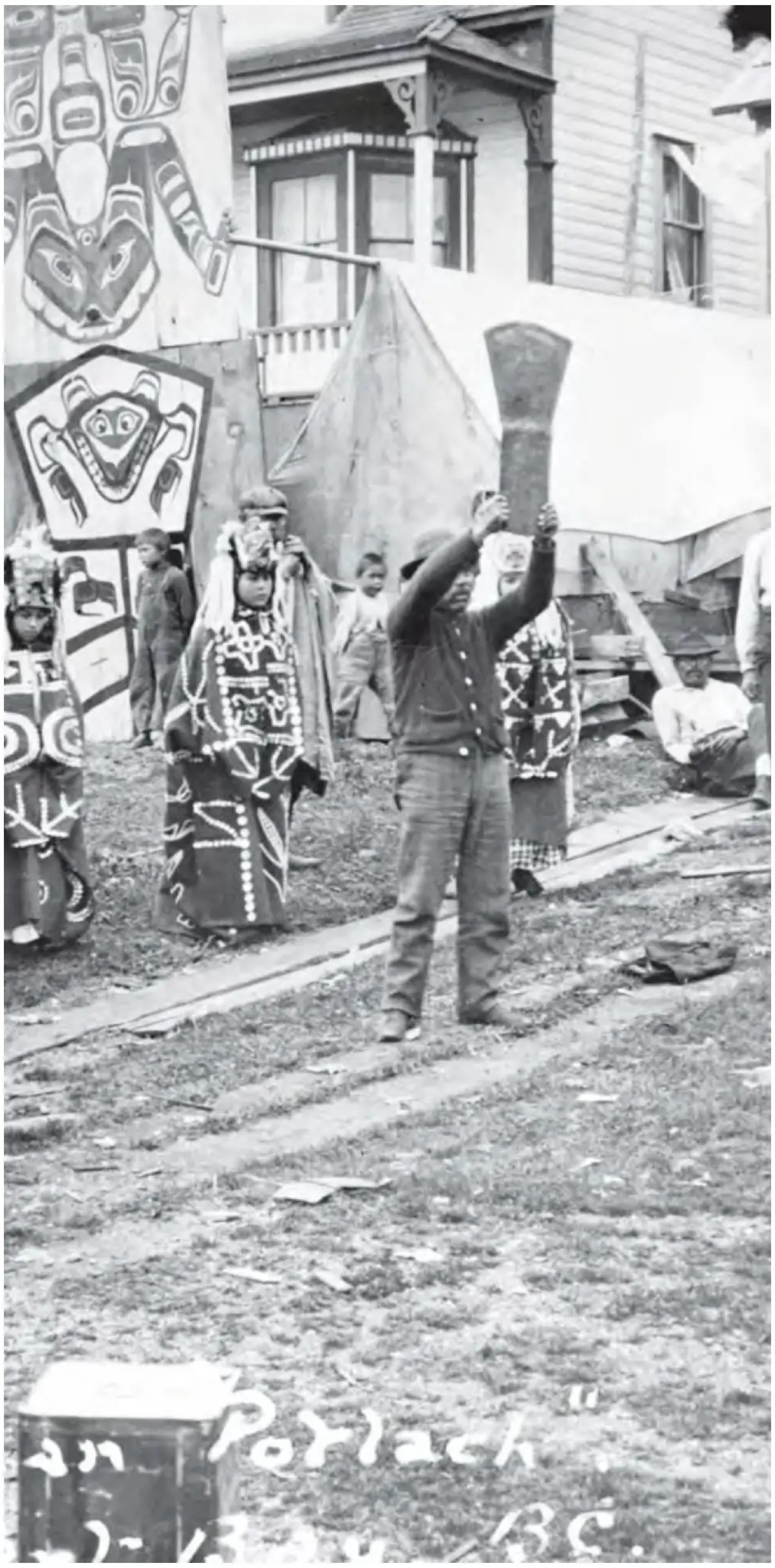
The portrait mask of a woman could have depicted an ancestor or a character in a story, says Wayne Alfred. The mask’s ovoid shape and artistic style hint at an origin among the Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw of Quatsino First Nation on Vancouver Island, where head-binding was practised until the early 20th century. “The mouth is carved open, suggesting the dancer would speak through it,” says Wasden. “Or a sound such as a special whistle would be used to perform this mask’s ceremony.”

The blue-painted mask with rays emanating from its face represents a celestial entity that sheds light. While Wayne Alfred believes it embodies the sun, Wasden thinks that the narrow rays are more characteristic of a star. Noting that the mask’s moustache and goatee show a facial-grooming style that was “reserved for the nobility,” Wasden surmises the mask depicts “a noble ancestor who possibly came from the stars or came to the earth as a star and transformed to become human.”

And the *nuła̱mała*, or “fool dancer,” was a sort of watchman or guardian with an abnormally large, runny nose, who kept order in the Big House during the Potlatch. “He flicks snot around. He wipes it on his coat. And he’s got a stick,” says Wayne Alfred. “If anybody does something that’s not right in the Big House, he’ll grab you by the leg and drag you out. So everybody sits still and there’s good behaviour.”

A Potlatch is governed by a strict protocol. Masks and other regalia, such as blankets and rattles, are passed down from generation to generation, as are the rights to perform the dances and songs that accompany them. For West Coast First Nations, these songs and dances — some of them hundreds or thousands of years old — form an unbroken link with their ancestors and are among their most precious possessions.

But to the missionaries who arrived in the 19th century, the Potlatch appeared to be a sinister pagan ritual. To convert the First Nations people to Christianity, they set about to eradicate it.



A Chief holds up a valuable copper shield while dancers in regalia stand behind him during a Potlatch at 'Ya̱lis (Alert Bay), B.C., sometime prior to 1922.

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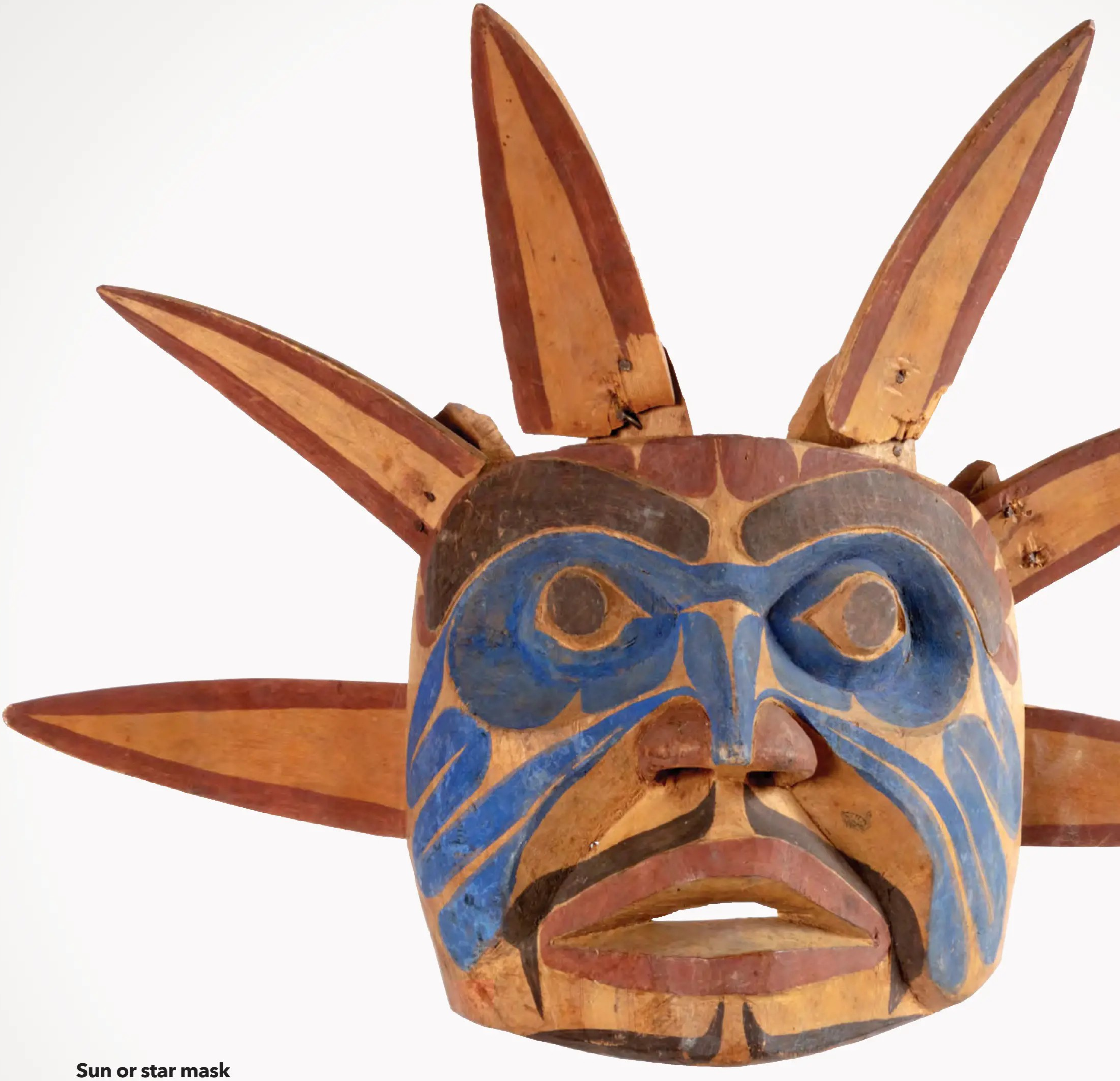

Sun or star mask

The rays extending from this mask indicate a celestial entity that sheds light. The bright-blue paint, made by mixing Reckitt's washing powder with water, is favoured by artists on the central coast of B.C. around Bella Coola. "The extensive use of the Reckitt's blue also could indicate that the artist is connecting to the colour of the dark blue sky at night when stars shine brightest," notes Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw artist William Wasden Jr.

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The Missionaries

The Catholic Order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate first established a mission on Vancouver Island at Esquimalt, near present-day Victoria, in 1858. Founded in France in 1816, the Oblates were a conservative order that emphasized humility, poverty and obedience, in opposition to European society’s trend toward science and secularism. They believed fervently in converting people to Christianity to gain their souls a place in heaven after death.

Among the first priests to arrive at Esquimalt was a zealous 29-year-old named Father Paul Durieu. He travelled widely, learned First Nations languages and, by 1890, rose through the ranks to become bishop of New Westminster, a diocese that encompassed all of mainland British Columbia.

As he ascended to a position of authority, Durieu spread his ideas and methods for evangelizing Indigenous people. He lobbied government officials to sign land treaties with First Nations that would create reserves large enough to insulate them from white settlers and the corrupting influences of alcohol and Protestantism. He strove to turn First Nations villages into enclaves of Catholic theocracy: Devout members of the community were designated to enforce Christian rules and morals — sometimes using corporal punishment — and the presiding Oblate priest had the power to depose a Chief if he failed to uphold religious standards. Key to Durieu’s vision was getting First Nations people to abandon their traditional customs and spiritual beliefs.

“At the time of their conversion to the Catholic Church, our Indians had to give up all their old fashioned amusements because they contained some traces of paganism and superstition,” Durieu’s disciple Father Émile Marie Bunoz wrote in his 1940 essay, “Bishop Durieu’s System.” “So they made bonfires with their century old totem poles. They had to burn the rattles, expensive coats and other paraphernalia of the medicine men … ‘Poashes’ [Potlatches], great and small, were forbidden. Gambling, dancing and some winter festivities had to be abandoned. Bishop Durieu strictly exacted the abolition of all the above practices because opposed to pure Christianity.”

Durieu and his fellow Oblates failed to convert the Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw and most other First Peoples of Vancouver Island, shuttering their missions there by the mid-1870s. While Protestant missionaries moved into Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw territory, the Oblates found greater success on the mainland. By the late 1870s, they had established missions from Vancouver as far east as the Kootenay Ranges on the border of present-day Alberta.

In the 1890s, the Oblates followed the gold rush to Yukon and established a northern foothold in Dawson. Then, they extended their reach down the coast to the area around Prince Rupert, B.C., throughout the territories of the Tsimshian, Haisla and Nisga’a peoples, and to the Haida homeland of Haida Gwaii (then also called the Queen Charlotte Islands).

In their evangelical zeal, Oblates and other missionaries worked hand in glove with the Canadian government to try to eradicate potlatching and to impose residential schools. “I respectfully request you, Sir … to have a law to stop the disastrous practice of Potlatching, and especially dancing,” wrote Oblate Father Gustave (George) Donckele to Prime Minister John A. Macdonald in 1884. “I am thoroughly convinced that unless stringent measures be taken, every effort will be fruitless; for parents bring up their children in such a way that it is impossible for anyone to inculcate in their minds any moral, social, or industrious knowledge.”

The federal government began funding church-run residential schools across Canada in the 1880s, and banned the Potlatch in 1884.

Donckele became principal of the Kuper Island residential school off the southern coast of British Columbia from 1890 to 1907. Official records of the school while it was under Catholic control from 1890 to 1962 show incidents of physical and sexual abuse, poor and insufficient food, untreated illnesses, harsh physical labour, children trying to run away — two died in the effort in 1959 — and, in 1895, an attempt by students to burn the school down.

The Collectors

By the 1870s and 1880s, evangelization by Catholic and Protestant missionaries, contact with settlers and a devastating smallpox epidemic in 1862 had taken a toll on the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest Coast. European and American museum curators, fearing that the traditional ways of life of First Nations and Inuit people were rapidly disappearing, sent collectors to obtain material evidence of these ancient cultures before it was too late.

So it was that in 1881, Berlin’s Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde (Royal Museum for Ethnology) sent Norwegian Capt. Johan Adrian Jacobsen on a collection expedition to the coasts of British Columbia and Alaska. After a successful voyage, the captain (who went by his middle name, Adrian) recruited his younger brother, Bernard Fillip (B.F.) Jacobsen, to help him on a second expedition in 1884.

Although the Jacobsens were not professional ethnologists, they had other qualifications for the job: Born and raised in a fishing village about 60 kilometres off the coast of Norway, they were accustomed to isolation, rough seas and harsh weather. The Jacobsens set out to acquire everything from tools like fish hooks, saws and paddles; to hats, shoes and articles of clothing; to ceremonial masks, rattles and blankets; to human skulls and grave goods.

In his book *Alaskan Voyage 1881-1883*, Adrian Jacobsen noted that he had no trouble buying ceremonial regalia in places where missionaries were actively converting the local populace to Christianity. There, many people were willing to sell the paraphernalia of their traditional cultural and spiritual practices. In places where people resisted evangelization, however, that was not the case.

> "ALL DANCES ARE MORE LIKE A RELIGIOUS AFFAIR AND THE GREATEST SECRET IS KEPT OF EVERYTHING."

In the Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw community of Mamalilikala on Village Island, B.C. — about a 40-kilometre boat ride from ‘Ya̱lis — B.F. Jacobsen discovered that people feared reprisals from their families and the community if they sold Potlatch regalia.

“Most of my buying was done in the night,” the Norwegian wrote in his unpublished reminiscences, now kept in the BC Archives. “All dances are more like a religious affair, and the greatest secret is kept of everything, and if a man should be caught in selling some of his secret wooden dance masks, rattles, or any paraphernalia belonging to the secret dances he would be killed [by means of a death curse] by the master of ceremonies and the Indian doctors.”

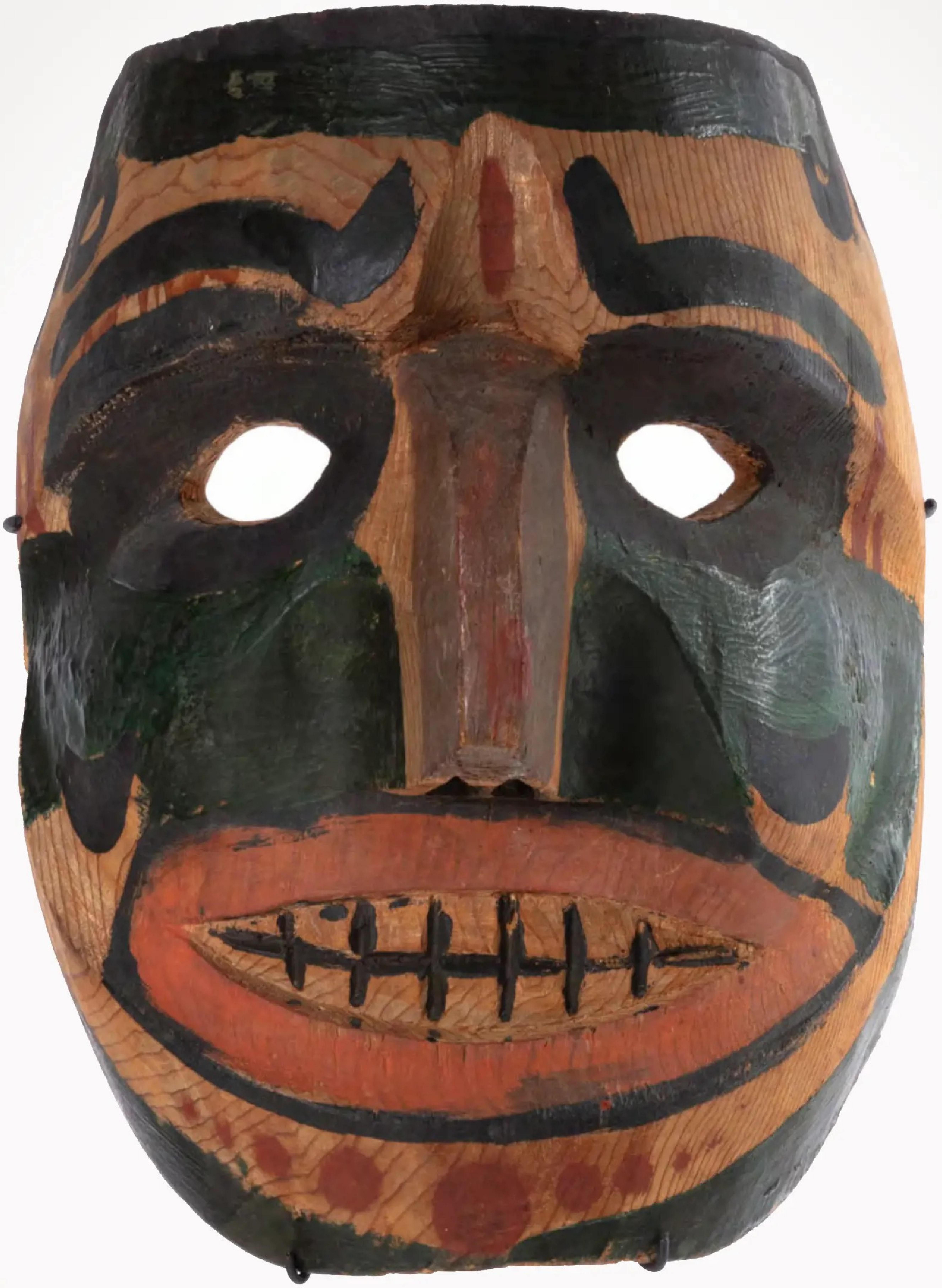
Although the Jacobsens purchased most items (while bargaining for the lowest possible prices), they also engaged in grave robbery. Intrigued by the head-binding practices in Quatsino, Adrian Jacobsen recounted secretly entering a cemetery “so that I might find a skull I could take with me for scientific study.” He wrote that he “succeeded in getting two of these, one male and one female.” At Chemainus on southeastern Vancouver Island, he entered an “old Indian burial place” where he stole “several wooden masks that were nailed on some grave boxes.”

Similarly, in her 1998 PhD thesis on Heiltsuk art, Martha Black, curator of Indigenous collections at the Royal BC Museum from 1997 to 2019, wrote that B.F. Jacobsen collected “skeletal remains, memorials, grave objects, old artifacts, and valued ceremonial properties.”

Adrian Jacobsen sent approximately 2,400 Pacific Northwest Coast pieces to the museum in Berlin, where most of them still reside. Afterward, the captain resumed his seafaring life. But his brother settled in Bella Coola, a Nuxalk community on the British Columbia coast, where he owned a cannery and continued to collect and trade.

In 1893, B.F. Jacobsen sold a collection of more than 200 Northwest Coast masks, headdresses, rattles, whistles, feast bowls, chests, grave monuments, tools and household items to the recently established Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology in Victoria (now the Royal BC Museum). These, supplemented by pieces later acquired by Victoria collector James Deans and naturalist Charles Newcombe, formed the foundation of the museum’s existing Indigenous collections.

Little did B.F. Jacobsen know that, decades later, a Catholic priest would view his museum collection with renewed interest following an appeal from the Pope, printed in the *Missions* newsletter of June 1923, for Indigenous “objects to exhibit” that would demonstrate “the people and their customs, the degree of culture and of civilization, the pagan religion and the true religion.”



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Nuła̱mała, “fool dancer”

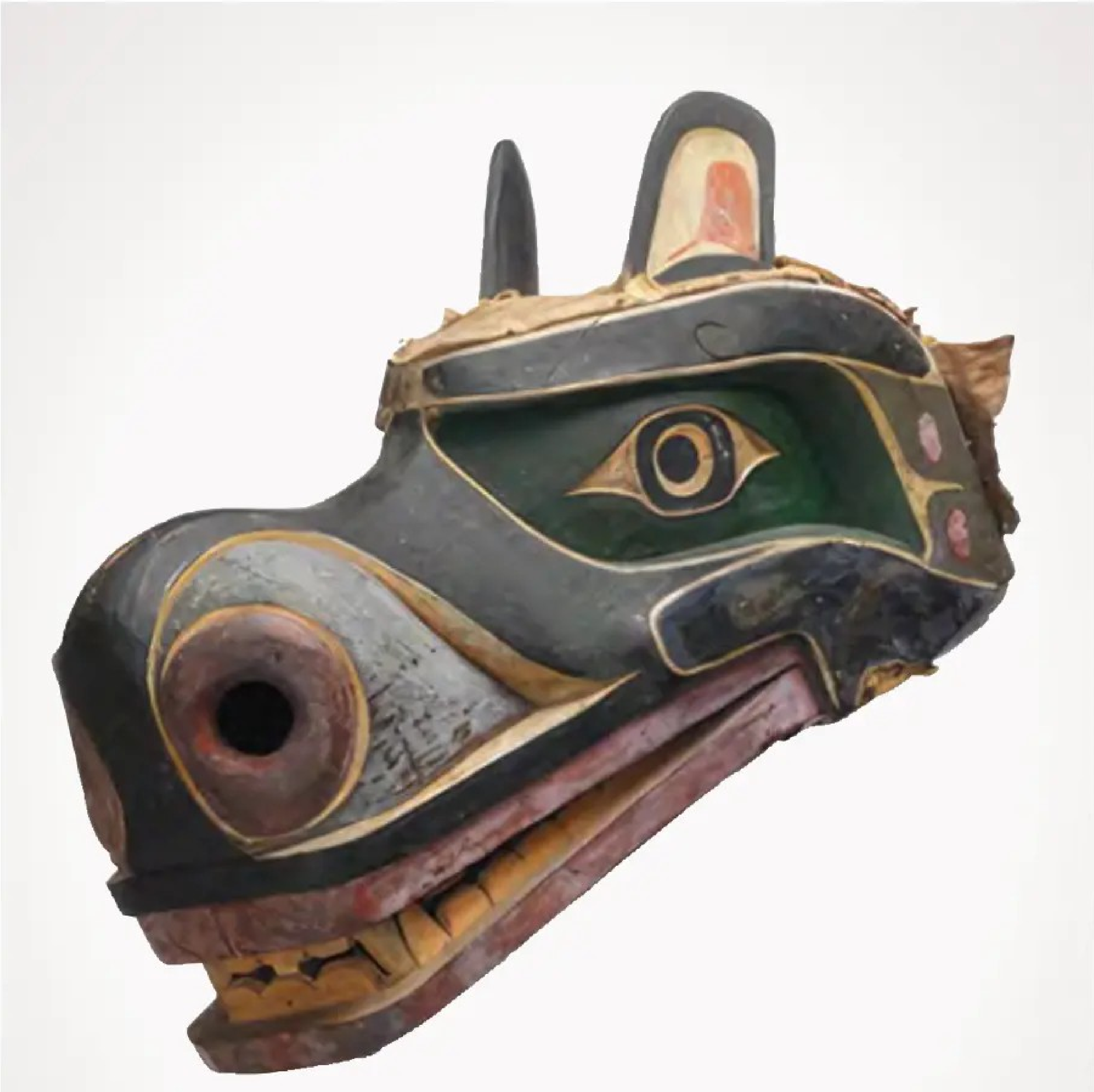
This mask was used in the ceremony of the fool dancer society — the oldest form of spiritual possession ceremony, where the spirit of the dancer is driven out through rituals including song and dance. “Fool dancers are abducted by a society of beings that live in a house that appears on the top of a lake and that disappears during the day,” says Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw artist William Wasden Jr. “People who are taken to the house of the *nuła̱mała* become insane and live as their captors do, often living in their own feces, and mucus constantly running from their oversized noses.” Often made in haste for the winter ceremonials, such masks were occasionally burned after use, returning the spirit of the dances back to the supernatural realm. This mask currently resides in the Vatican Ethnological Museum *Anima Mundi*.

The Potlatch Ban

In the early 20th century, the federal government doubled down on its efforts to assimilate First Nations people into British-Canadian society. The law banning the Potlatch — which officials had often ignored, considering it vague and unenforceable — was strengthened in the late 1890s, and it began to be more rigorously applied after 1913, when the hardline assimilationist Duncan Campbell Scott became deputy superintendent general of the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. In 1918, the law was again amended so that people accused of potlatching could be tried by an Indian Agent — the very person tasked with enforcing the law — rather than by an independent judge or magistrate.

In 1920, Scott made attendance at residential schools or day schools compulsory for Status Indians from seven to 15 years of age, unleashing an era when children were forcibly taken away from their families, and parents could be sent to jail for non-compliance.

In some cases, the measures had the desired effect. “My great-grandmother, she gave everything to do with potlatching up. She made her husband give up all his rights because she was convinced by the church that it was dirty and savage, that it was the devil’s work,” says ‘Na̱mgis First Nation member Molly Willie. “He gave up everything [to do with] the Potlatch. So, when that happens, either you go down to a beach and you burn it all, or you hand it over to officials, either an Indian Agent or an agent of the church.”



This Na̱n (grizzly bear) mask was confiscated in 1922 and returned to 'Ya̱lis in the 1970s or '80s.

U’MISTA CULTURAL SOCIETY

In other cases, the laws served to drive traditional practices underground. “My grampa built a big house. He tore [down] his Big House, the real one, and he built a big, giant European house. Three or four storeys high, counting the basement,” says Wayne Alfred. “And upstairs he built a gym — he said it was a gym. And that’s where they had the ceremonies.”

Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw Chief Dan Cranmer was one of those who refused to give up his traditions. In December 1921, he held a Potlatch on Village Island, inviting people from First Nations communities all around on the pretext of holding a Christmas party. But someone tipped off Indian Agent William Halliday, who arrived with RCMP Sgt. Donald Angerman to break up the festivities and arrest the participants.

The crime of potlatching carried a minimum jail sentence of two months. But Halliday offered the people he’d arrested a deal. As he recounts in his memoir, *Potlatch and Totem*, he told the accused that they could avoid prison if “they were not only to promise that for all time they would refrain from potlatching, but that they were also to use their influence to see that nobody else took part in any of these proceedings; and in addition to this, they agreed to surrender all their Potlatch paraphernalia, such as dancing-masks, head-dresses, coppers, and various other things, which would be sold to the various museums by the Department of Indian Affairs and the proceeds given over to the Indians.”

Those who refused to sign the agreement were sentenced to two months in prison. Those who signed, as well as members of their families and villages, surrendered their prized possessions to Halliday. By April 1922, more than 450 pieces of regalia were confiscated: Most were sold to the Victoria Memorial Museum in Ottawa (the precursor to today’s Canadian Museum of History) and to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. About 35 items were bought by the American collector George Heye, and others were kept by Angerman, Halliday and Scott for their private collections. The prices paid for the regalia were not considered fair by their owners, and some complained that they had never been paid at all.

After the arrests, Halliday wrote to Scott: “It is quite apparent that the Potlatch question is at its crisis. The Indians were shown plainly that the law was intended to be absolutely enforced.… I firmly believe in my own mind that the Potlatch has been killed as they are all afraid to go on any further with it, realizing that they are fighting a losing game.”

This was how matters stood on the Pacific Northwest Coast when, a year later and half a world away, Pope Pius XI announced his plans for a grand exposition honouring the missionaries who, in his words, “have trod paths so difficult and laborious … to the outposts of Faith and Truth, Religion and Civilization, [and] are each continuing the most beautiful, the most meritorious, and the holiest of battles.”

The 1925 Pontifical Missionary Exposition

Following the pontiff's call, Archbishop Augustin Dontenwill, superior-general of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, rallied his missionaries to the cause. He sent out detailed advice via the *Missions* newsletter about what they should collect for the exposition, stressing the importance of the sacred: "statues or images of gods, demons, spirits, ancestors, etc., objects, clothing, or special ornaments used in the religion."

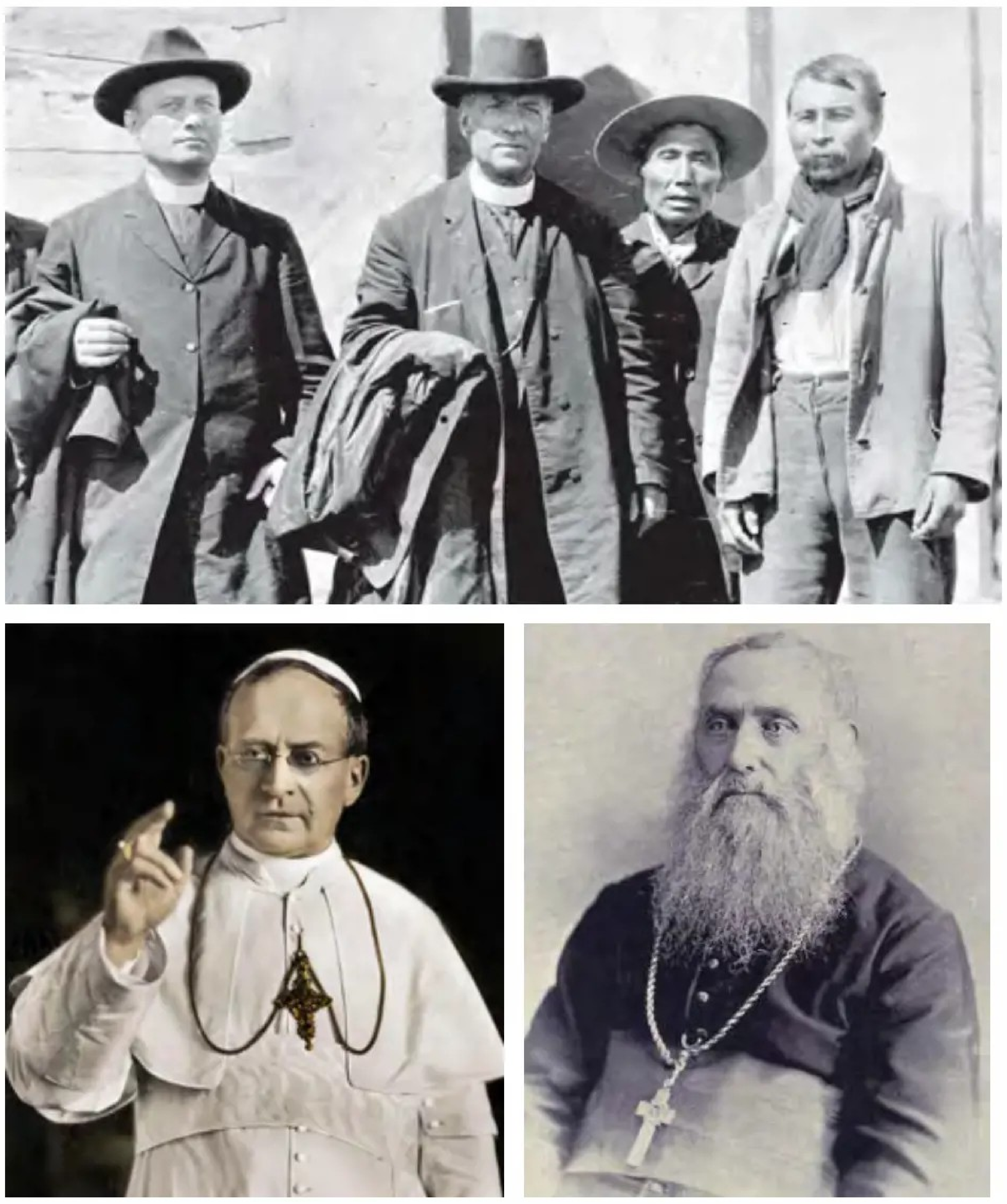
He advised the superiors of missions "to put themselves in contact with the governments of the countries and the tribal chiefs among whom they work, in order to borrow the various collections of objects that illustrate the life of the inhabitants." And he assured them in the September 1923 edition of *Missions*: "The objects exhibited will remain the property of those who submit them. Instructions will be given, at the appropriate time, about how to submit these objects and how to retrieve them."

In the Yukon diocese, which included northern B.C., Vicar Apostolic Msgr. Émile Marie Bunoz responded to the call from his seat in Prince Rupert. His handwritten list, headed "*Objets envoyés à l'Exposition Vaticane*" (Objects sent to the Vatican Exposition), survives today, but it contains few details beyond names and prices. Listed are caribou-hide gloves, beaver-pelt mittens, moosehide moccasins and "totems" carved of wood and argillite — all noted as "*fait par sauvages*" (made by savages). The list also includes a mask, priced at $6.50 (about $115 today), and a "*crecelle de sorcier*" (sorcerer's rattle), priced at $15 (about $265 today).

It's impossible to know which mask in the Vatican's collection corresponds to the one on Bunoz's list, since the paper trail has disappeared over the ensuing decades. The *crecelle de sorcier* is almost certainly the red-and-black raven rattle that still resides in the Vatican Ethnological Museum *Anima Mundi*. It depicts a raven transporting an ancestor to heavenly spiritual realms, with a small frog on the ancestor's chest. The rattle was probably made by a Tsimshian artisan and would be called a "*sasoo*" in the Tsimshian language, Susan Marsden, director/curator of the Museum of Northern British Columbia in Prince Rupert, said in an email. "The Tsimshian Chiefs use this type of rattle in their welcome dance at a feast/Potlatch."

In southern B.C., Dontenwill's appeal to the diocese of New Westminster met with less success. In Victoria, Rev. John Welch, vicar of missions in British Columbia, replied: "For the Exposition, I will do all that I can; but … our contribution must necessarily be meagre and of little significance. We no longer have any relics of the ancient times. For two generations, our Indians have all been Catholics, and any emblem of paganism disappeared from their midst years ago."

However, Welch somehow convinced officials at the provincial museum in Victoria (now the Royal BC Museum) to provide eight pieces from their ethnological collection to the missionary exposition. Three of these are identified in Black's PhD thesis as masks of a "Sea Spirit," an "Eagle," and the "Face of a Woman." It's likely, though not certain, that the latter is the Quatsino portrait mask of a woman that still resides in the Vatican collection today.



Top: Left to right, Bishop (later Archbishop) Émile Marie Bunoz stands with Rev. Nicholas Coccola, Leon Ketlo and Allan Ketlo at Fort Fraser, B.C., circa early 1900s. Bottom left: Pope Pius XI in 1929. Bottom right: Bishop Paul Durieu, circa late 1800s.

The Royal BC Museum refuses to release details concerning the remaining five pieces, on the basis that it does not have the right to disclose information about First Nations' belongings without their consent. It is therefore impossible to know for sure whether the *ḵ́wasanuma*, the *nuła̱mała* and the sun or star ancestor came from the B.C. museum. Tantalizingly, however, a 1909 guide to the museum's anthropological collection lists several Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw masks, including "the moon," "the sun" and one labelled "Nutlmatl" (*sic*) — perhaps a misspelling of *nułamała*.

It's also possible that the Oblates obtained masks — and passed them on to the Vatican — through some other channel whose documentation has been lost. To Molly Willie, a member of 'Na̱mg̱is First Nation, the Oblates' acquisition of the masks must be seen in the larger, coercive context of missionaries who had worked for decades, together with Canadian authorities, to suppress the Potlatch and force children into residential schools. The bottom line, she believes, is that it's wrong to refer to the regalia as a "gift" to the Vatican. "That's not a gift. That's not given. It's taken. And it doesn't matter how," she says. "It's harming us. It's harming our culture. It's harming our preservation for our future."

TOP: BC ARCHIVES ITEM D-00445. BOTTOM LEFT AND RIGHT: ALAMY

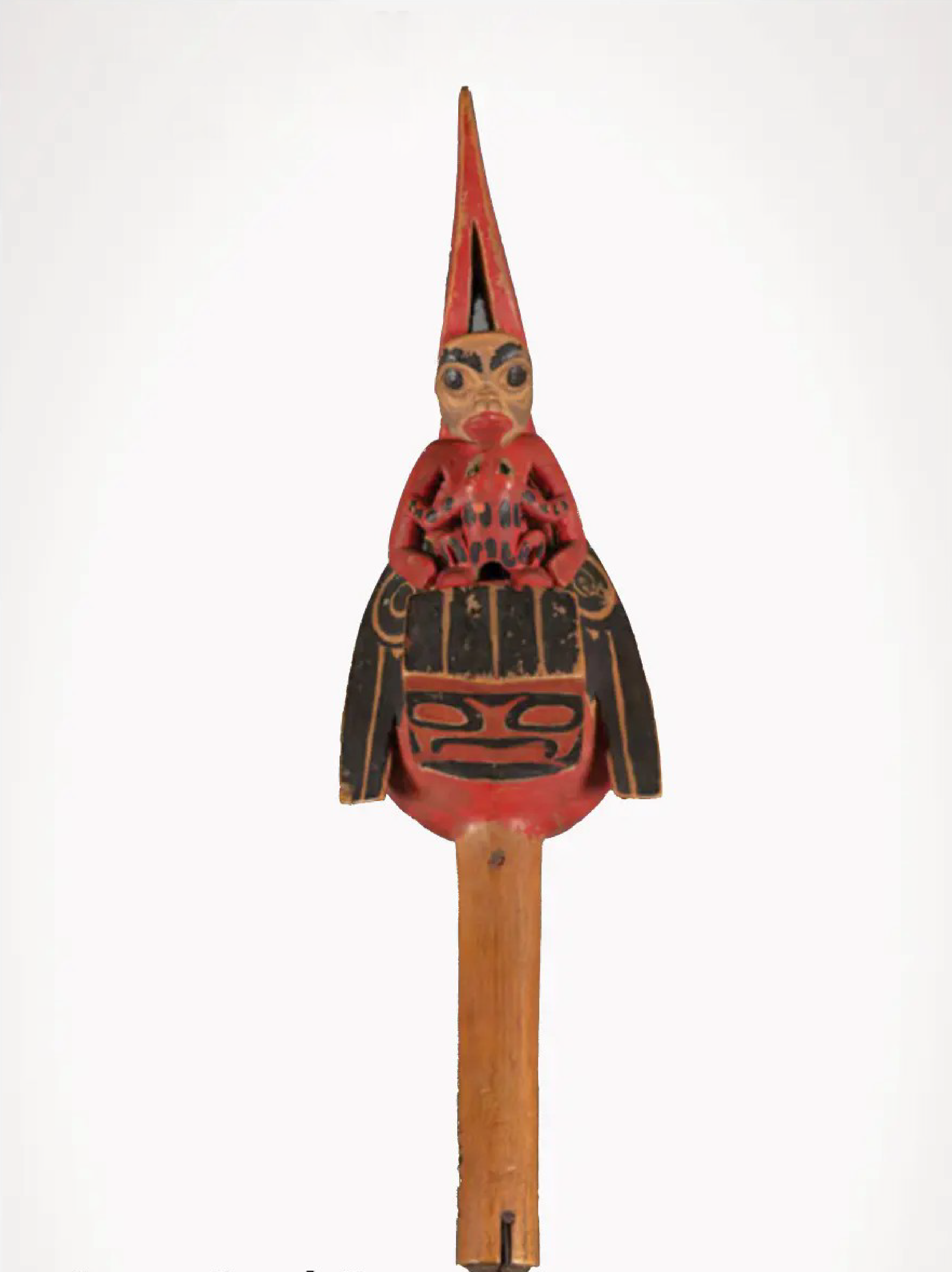
Apology and Repatriation

In 1991, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Canada published a formal "Apology to the First Nations of Canada." In addition to apologizing for residential schools, the four-page document states in part: "We wish to apologize as well for our past dismissal of many of the riches of Native religious traditions. We broke some of your peace pipes and considered some of your sacred practices as pagan and superstitious.... We apologize for this blindness and disrespect." While not excusing the actions of the missionaries, the mea culpa states: "These men and women sincerely believed that their vocations and actions were serving both God and the best interest of the native peoples to whom they were ministering."

In 1951, the Canadian government ended the Potlatch ban. In the 1970s and 1980s — after decades of pressure from West Coast Chiefs and from Chief Dan Cranmer's eldest daughter, Gloria Cranmer Webster — the museums in Ottawa and Toronto returned the regalia that was confiscated after Cranmer's Potlatch to its home communities. Today, staff at the U'mista Cultural Centre, which was established in 'Ya̱lis to house the returned treasure, continue to retrieve pieces that were taken by Indian Agent Halliday, RCMP Sgt. Angerman, Deputy Sup. Gen. Scott and the collector Heye, and sold to museums and private collectors around the world.

There is no evidence that the masks and rattle in the Vatican collection were part of the Cranmer Potlatch confiscation. For this reason, the U'mista Cultural Centre, whose mandate focuses on the Cranmer confiscation, would not be involved in any possible efforts to repatriate regalia from the Vatican, says the centre's executive director, Juanita Johnston.

Johnston adds that returning cultural belongings comes with challenges, including the difficulty of tracing provenance, the cost of art shipping and insurance, and the logistics of proper storage and display. "Not everyone is ready for repatriation. It's a lot of work."



Sasoo, "rattle"

This Chief's rattle was probably carved by an artisan of the Tsimshian First Nation in northern B.C. It features a raven with a human sitting on its back and a frog on the human's chest. "The small frog with its tongue connecting to the human indicates a communication and guidance in the journey to the spirit world," says Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw artist William Wasden Jr.

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The Pontifical Missionary Exposition closed on Jan. 10, 1926. Contrary to Dontenwill's assurance that the objects would "remain the property of those who submit them," the treasures gathered were retained by the Vatican.

Chelsea Meloche, repatriation and community liaison for the Royal BC Museum, says the eight pieces the museum contributed to the exposition were never intended as gifts but, rather, as loans, and that past efforts to retrieve them from the Vatican have been unsuccessful. "Given the loan occurred 100 years ago, the Royal BC Museum and the Vatican Museum are working together to understand the terms of this agreement," Meloche said in an email.

"The Indigenous Collections and Repatriation team is actively working with the Nations affected by this loan on the next steps, and we are following their direction. As this matter is an active conversation with our partner Nations we cannot provide further details."

The Vatican stated in an email that, while it is still studying the archival documents related to the 1925 exposition, "to date we do not have records or certifications stating that some of the objects sent to the Vatican came from the Royal Museum of BC intended as a 'temporary loan' or 'permanent donation.' " The email goes on to say that the Vatican has not received a direct request from the Royal BC Museum to return the regalia.

In March 2023, the Vatican formally repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery — a legal concept dating back to 15th-century papal bulls, under which European nations gave themselves the right to seize and possess territory occupied by non-Christian peoples. The official repudiation statement from the Holy See affirmed the Vatican's "strong support for the principles contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," and said, "the Church is committed to accompany indigenous peoples and to foster efforts aimed at promoting reconciliation and healing."

According to Irwin Price, Traditional Use Study coordinator of the Quatsino First Nation, the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery brings the church and First Nations to a “critical juncture where we can explore meaningful reconciliation and the return of sacred cultural artifacts.” He says Quatsino First Nation is in the early stages of planning the construction of a cultural space, with the express goal of repatriating as many of these as possible.

“While we understand that the details surrounding the acquisition of these artifacts by the Vatican remain unclear, we know that the Catholic Church was among the first institutions to establish a presence in our traditional territory of Xwatis (Quatsino), before being succeeded by the Anglican Church,” Price states in an email. “As such we are seeking transparency regarding the acquisition history of these artifacts and requesting the possibility of repatriation, in line with the growing movement to return Indigenous cultural property to its rightful owners.... The masks represent not only art and history but also a tangible connection to our ancestors and the ongoing efforts of our community to reclaim and protect its cultural legacy.”

In ‘Ya̱lis, Willie says she is considering initiating a discussion in her Nation’s council about asking the Vatican to return the regalia. “We have to hold on so strongly to what we can, and we don’t even have all of what our ancestors had. But they held on for dear life to what they could, to continue passing on what they could to us,” she says. “It’s not about us. It’s about 1,000 years from now, for our grandkids to say, ‘I still have my land. I still have my songs and dances and Potlatch because my grandparents worked so hard at preserving that.’...

“So if the Vatican gives it back, or returns it, or if they even want to say, ‘We’re gifting it back to you,’ my great-great-great-great-grandkids will have something. And there can be a feeling behind it: This is what was taken and — whether it was a gift or not — look at what they returned. Because they knew it was right. They knew where it belonged. They knew where its spiritual roots were.”

Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw master carver Wayne Alfred in 'Ya̱lis in 2024.

Above left: Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw Elder Pauline Alfred in 'Ya̱lis in 2024. Above right: Molly Willie, right, and her daughter Kimberly Willie outside the U'mista Cultural Centre in 'Ya̱lis in 2024.

ALL PHOTOS: KATE JAIMET

Staff member Barbara Morphy, seen here in March 1945, in the film section of the London Public Library, in London, Ont., where many National Film Board productions were available.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA 4295637

The REEL STORY

When it comes to the Hollywood movie industry, Canada has always been in the picture.

by Christopher Guly

If you're in Toronto in early September, expect to see throngs of would-be celebrity-sighters gathered at the entrances of such swanky hotels as The Ritz-Carlton and Shangri-La, as well as venues like Roy Thomson Hall and TIFF Bell Lightbox. It's the time of year when thousands of movie fans descend on Canada's largest city to attend the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

Over the past half-century, TIFF has become one of the world's premier showcases for movie releases — its People's Choice Award, based on audience voting, has become a bellwether for Academy Award winners — and "a massively important" film festival, according to veteran Canadian comedic actor Martin Short (see "Short's story," page 43).

In Short's view, TIFF's presence in Toronto further underscores the city as a film capital with the "greatest camerapeople, the greatest sound people, the greatest set designers" working in Hollywood's major studios or when Hollywood comes to Canada to make movies at a lower cost.

Top: Toronto-born actor Mary Pickford.

Bottom: *Let Us Be Gay*, MGM, featuring Hedda Hopper, Norma Shearer, and Marie Dressler

Los Angeles Times film editor Joshua Rothkopf — who attended the festival for nearly 20 years, beginning in 2002 — says he appreciates how TIFF "functions as a great one-stop shop," featuring films from other international festivals, such as the Cannes Film Festival. And Toronto film critic Adam Nayman, who lectures on cinema at the University of Toronto and Toronto Metropolitan University, says TIFF was created to get Hollywood to send its "stars and movies for publicity."

Beyond coming to Toronto to showcase its work, Hollywood has come to Canada for decades to make movies. Watch a Christmas movie on the Lifetime or Hallmark channel over the holiday season, and there's a good chance it was shot in Canada. Some of the biggest box-office and Academy Award-winning movies over the past 30 years — including *The Shape of Water* and parts of *Titanic* and *Chicago* — have been filmed in "Hollywood North," a title principally applied to Toronto and Vancouver but extended to such other cities as Montreal, Winnipeg and Halifax.

Still, Canada's connection to Hollywood reaches even further back. From the star power of silent-film diva Mary Pickford to the technology developed in the early days of the National Film Board of Canada to the sound, special effects and film editing that all converge to make movie magic, Canada has been Hollywood's best supporting actor since Tinseltown's inception.

Movie stars

More than a century ago, Canadians helped establish Hollywood as the planet's movie capital, and a key builder was an actress born Gladys Louise Smith on April 8, 1892, in Toronto. She later took the stage name Mary Pickford.

Ironically dubbed "America's Sweetheart" during the silent-film era, Pickford became one of cinema's first celebrities in front of the camera. She began her acting career onstage at age seven in her hometown, and not long after, she appeared on Broadway. It was there, while co-starring in *The Warrens of Virginia* in 1907 with director and producer Cecil B. DeMille (whose brother, William, wrote the play), she assumed her stage name. But it would be onscreen and off where Pickford would make an indelible mark on movie history and become one of the most recognizable women in the world.

In 1916, she signed a deal with Adolph Zukor, a co-founder of Paramount Pictures, which made her the first actress to enter a $1-million contract. Two years later, Pickford, along with her then-future-husband Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin and pioneering director D.W. Griffith, formed United Artists Corporation. In 1927, she and Fairbanks were among the 36 founders of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), which bestows the Academy Awards.

Pickford starred in 52 feature films during her 55-year career and received two Oscars: Best Actress for the 1929 drama *Coquette*, and an honorary Academy Award in 1975 "in recognition of her unique contributions to the

TOP: SCREENPROD/PHOTONONSTOP/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO. BOTTOM: REPRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE COLLECTION OF CANADIAN WOMEN IN FILM MUSEUM

film industry and the development of film as an artistic medium." Pickford, who died in Santa Monica on May 29, 1979, at age 87, was one of three Canadian actresses who won consecutive Oscars in the early 1930s.

The second, Norma Shearer, born in Montreal on Aug. 11, 1902, was named Best Actress for her role in the 1930 film *The Divorcee*. Following Shearer's win, Marie Dressler — born Leila Marie Koerber on Nov. 9, 1868, in Cobourg, Ont. — received the Best Actress Oscar in 1931 for the comedy *Min and Bill*. Shearer was also nominated in that category and would receive three more lead-actress nominations in the 1930s. No other Canadian women would receive an acting Oscar until 1994, when Winnipeg-born Anna Paquin won Best Supporting Actress — at the age of 11 in her acting debut in *The Piano*.

Innovation and technology

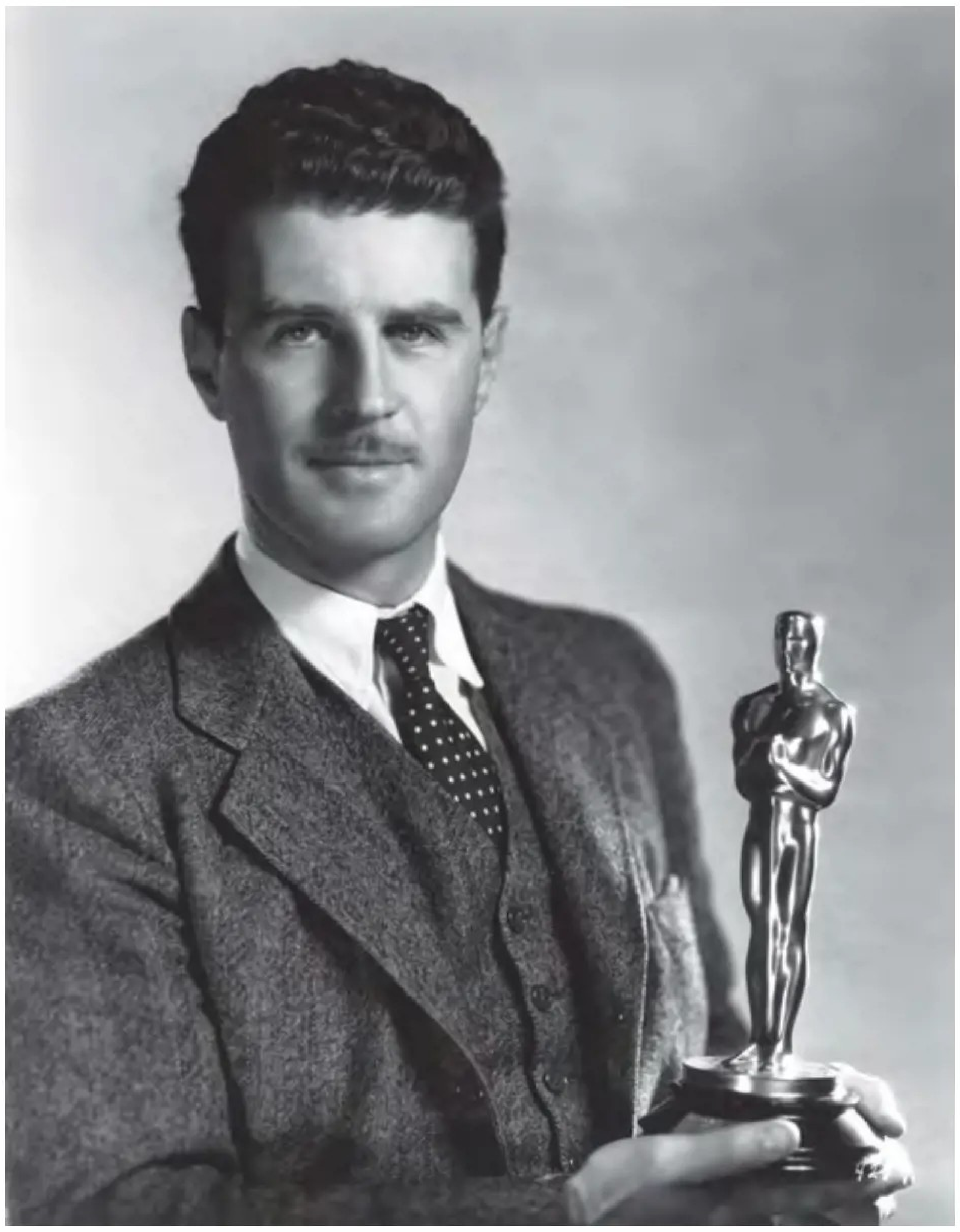
If Canadians have been enjoying the spotlight for the past century or so, we have this country's innovative minds to thank for shining it. David Sobel, a Toronto-based historian and former Ontario civil servant, created a website called The Moving Past that highlights 15 of the more than 1,000 Canadian films made between 1918 and 1929. That large volume of early cinematic work was driven by both the Ontario Motion Picture Bureau — the world's first state-funded film production company, established by the Ontario government in 1917 — and the Exhibits and Publicity Bureau, formed by the federal government a year later, eventually becoming the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) in 1941 (see "Well-documented contribution," page 41).

> **"Hollywood North" is a title principally applied to Toronto and Vancouver but extended to such other cities as Montreal, Winnipeg and Halifax.**

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2022
TRANSFORM AT

ALAMY

A crowd gathers outside of the main celebrity entrance at Toronto's TIFF Bell Lightbox in 2022.



The federally funded films were mainly produced to promote Canada as a tourism destination, and those produced by Ontario focused on educational work for groups like farmers or factory workers. But the camera operators, set designers, editors and writers involved became much in demand for the skills they amassed while shooting films "in steady, relatively well-paid jobs," explains Sobel. Crews on sets in the early days of Hollywood, meanwhile, were without a job after a film was shot — not unlike today, he says.

"The technical know-how that was developed early on through these government motion picture bureaus — that didn't exist in the United States — made a significant impact" on Hollywood's nascent film industry, he says.

Although he didn't work for either the Canadian or Ontario film bureau, Winnipeg-born Osmond Borradaile was a pioneer in Tinseltown. A consequential cinematographer, he worked on silent movies with such legends as Rudolph Valentino, Gloria Swanson and Lillian Gish, and then "talkies" with Cecil B. DeMille. Among Borradaile's notable achievements was filming the aerial sequences for eccentric American billionaire Howard Hughes' 1930 film, *Hell's Angels*, in which Hughes — the film's producer and director — served as the pilot for the shoot.

Borradaile was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1982 and died in West Vancouver in 1999 at the age of 100.

TOP/BOTTOM: ALAMY

Top: Douglas Shearer, head of the Sound Department at MGM, holds his Academy Award for Best Sound for 1930's *The Big House*.

Bottom: Osmond Borradaile in 1922 (at right, behind camera) on the set of *Beyond the Rocks*.

> **On the music side, Howard Shore is one of the few composers who has an immediately appreciable style.**

Scene and heard

As early as the 1920s, Douglas Shearer (brother of actress Norma) was making movies heard. Born on Nov. 17, 1899, in Westmount, Que., he headed to California in 1923, where he joined Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) Studios. He was appointed head of the sound department when the talkies arrived in 1928. It was a smart move.

Between 1929 and 1951, Shearer won seven Academy Awards — two for special effects and five for sound — and was nominated for 14 more. Douglas's first Oscar, for Best Sound Recording for *The Big House*, was in 1931, the same year Norma won hers and the only time in Academy Award history when a brother and sister received Oscars on the same night.

Shearer and the MGM Studio Sound Department also received an Award of Merit, in the form of an Oscar statuette, in 1936, for the development of a sound-recording system. In *The Film Encyclopedia*, Ephraim Katz writes that during Shearer's "more than 40 years with MGM, he contributed more than any other man in Hollywood to the perfection of motion picture sound."

On the music side, Toronto-born Howard Shore shines in Hollywood. His work on two installments of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy won him three Academy Awards: one for Best Original Song and two for Best Original Score, making him the first Canadian to win two Oscars in that category. He is, according to Rothkopf of the *Los Angeles Times*, "one of the few composers who has an immediately appreciable style, especially the way he uses chords."

Canadians have proven their worth on the post-production side, too, with three Academy Awards for film editing, including James Cameron for *Titanic* and Toronto-born Ralph E. Winters; the latter took home two Oscars — his last for the epic 1959 film *Ben-Hur*, which won an unprecedented 11 trophies. For Best Production Design, formerly known as art design, Canadians have won 13 Academy Awards, with seven going to Victoria-born art director Richard Day from 1936 to 1955, when he won Oscars for the classics *How Green Was My Valley*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *On the Waterfront*, among others.

Colin Low works on the set of his film *Universe* (1960).

NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

Well-documented contribution

Some of the major inroads made in Hollywood regarding documentaries and animation have come from the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), the government-funded film-production agency.

In 1942, *Churchill's Island* – a propaganda film chronicling the defence of Great Britain during the Second World War and narrated by Canadian actor Lorne Greene – became the first film to win an Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Subject. The NFB would go on to receive more than 75 Oscar nominations and 12 Academy Awards, including an honorary Academy Award in 1988 "in recognition of its 50th anniversary and its dedicated commitment to originate artistic, creative and technological activity and excellence in every area of film making."

About half of those Oscar nods and wins were for animation, a medium that the NFB helped develop for Hollywood. To boot, some of the first computer-generated animated films created with a SEL-840A general-purpose digital computer include filmmaker Peter Foldes's 1974 Oscar-nominated short, *Hunger*, produced by the NFB.

Beyond animation, the federal government's film-production agency helped spawn a revolutionary format for screening movies. At Montreal's Expo 67, the NFB presented *In the Labyrinth*, which used 35 mm and 70 mm film projected simultaneously on five screens. One of the filmmakers involved, Roman Kroitor, was a pioneer in Canada of cinéma-vérité and the creator of the software and hardware system called SANDDE, which designs hand-drawn stereoscopic 3D animation content. Kroitor went on to help develop IMAX large-format technology.

Before that, Kroitor had already appeared on the radar of one of the world's top movie directors. A 1960 documentary short titled *Universe*, which he and colleague Colin Low made, caught the attention of Stanley Kubrick, who relied on it to create his vision of space in his 1968 masterpiece, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Kubrick then cast Canadian Douglas Rain, the narrator in *Universe*, to voice the hostile HAL 9000 in his movie.

Top: Sarah Polley on the set of 2012's *Stories We Tell*.

Middle: Denis Villeneuve in 2013 on the set of *Prisoners*.

Bottom: David Cronenberg and a 1993 TIFF poster.

Celebrated directors

In the mid-1970s, Toronto became the hub of Canadian feature-film production. This was thanks in large part to a capital cost allowance, introduced in 1974, allowing producers to deduct all of their investment in a Canadian movie and defer taxes until profits were earned. "But so much of what ended up getting made ostensibly to resist American dominance were Canadian knockoffs of American movies," says Nayman, who has written about filmmakers including David Cronenberg for *The New Yorker*. "Is this because the filmmakers of the tax-shelter period were so unimaginative and mercenary that they just copied American movies in the hope of making movies and a return on investment — or is it that it's really hard to say what Canadian identity is in the first place?"

Rothkopf remembers growing up on New York's Long Island when "pop culture was dominated by Canadians." His favourite movie as a 14-year-old was the 1985 time-travelling classic, *Back to the Future*, starring Canada's Michael J. Fox, who is not only a five-time Emmy Award winner but also the recipient of a Governor General's Performing Arts Award and an honorary Oscar for his humanitarian work.

"When my tastes grew and I started getting into art cinema and serious movies, filmmakers like Atom Egoyan and David Cronenberg — and maybe most of all, Sarah Polley — were central to my understanding of what serious art was," says Rothkopf, a former senior movies editor at *Entertainment Weekly*. He credits Polley's deeply personal family account, *Stories We Tell*, produced by the NFB, with "expanding what we think of as documentary." Rothkopf was the chair of the New York Film Critics Circle when it recognized the non-fiction film as the best documentary in 2013.

In Rothkopf's opinion, Quebec has also produced two key filmmakers who have made an indelible mark on Hollywood's cinematic history. With his Oscar-winning 2013 film, *Dallas Buyers Club*, and the first season of the HBO series *Big Little Lies*, which he directed, the late Jean-Marc Vallée was "a player and shaper of culture — someone who could channel commercial instincts into something that had a brain," says Rothkopf. He adds that Academy Award-nominated director Denis Villeneuve — whose *Dune* parts one and two have earned more than US$1.1 billion at the box office — "is the great hope of Hollywood filmmaking. He's a big-budget filmmaker who has a real sensibility."

According to Nayman, though, Villeneuve and Vallée were "only successful in the States by evacuating any Québécois identity and working in English. Even the French-Canadian filmmakers who succeed are the ones who can camouflage their films as non-French Canadian and work in English." He believes that, in some ways,

TOP/MIDDLE: ALAMY. BOTTOM: TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY TSPA_0041264F

> **So much of what ended up getting made ostensibly to resist American dominance were Canadian knockoffs of American movies.**

Canada helped build Hollywood's film industry "partially at its own expense," resulting in domestic movies that "look cheaper with less famous people in them.

"I don't think any national film industry has as fraught a relationship to Hollywood as we do because it's not adversarial," he continues. "We are supplicants to them." He adds that "for directors who stayed, it's a short list and a high bar. David Cronenberg is a great case study. But how many people can be David Cronenberg?"

Cronenberg lives in Toronto, as did the late Norman Jewison. The latter, who made such films as 1967's Academy Award-winning *In the Heat of the Night*, enjoyed success working in the U.S. because he "saw how limited the opportunities were here," says Nayman.

But that has resulted in a significant Canadian constellation within Hollywood's galaxy populated by stars such as Martin Short. The actor views his compatriots as having made "an enormous impact" on Hollywood, "just based on the numbers," referring to Canada's population of 40 million compared with the more than 346 million who live in the U.S.

"Maybe it is about that we live between two major influences — the United States, the sexy sister, and England, the glamorous sister — and maybe we're the sister who is way better looking than we think we are."

Want more homegrown star power? Go to **CanadasHistory.ca/ReelMen** to learn about Canadian actors William Shatner and Colm Feore!

ALAMY

Martin Short attends the 65th Cannes Film Festival.

Short's story

Born in Hamilton on March 26, 1950, Martin Short had planned to become a physician. Instead, he graduated from McMaster University in 1972 with a degree in social work and moved to Toronto. There, alongside fellow Canadians Eugene Levy, Victor Garber and Andrea Martin, he appeared in the off-Broadway play *Godspell*, with Canada's Paul Shaffer as musical director.

Going to Hollywood "wasn't the goal at all," says Short, who lives in Pacific Palisades, a coastal Los Angeles neighbourhood. "My plan was never to leave Toronto, where all my friends were – and I was competitive with my friends."

He joined the comedy troupe The Second City with some of his pals, which led to the wildly popular *SCTV* series. He left the show in 1979 for L.A., where he starred in the sitcom *The Associates*, which was cancelled after just nine episodes. The city became his home base and Hollywood a part of his career, leading to memorable roles in *Three Amigos* and *Father of the Bride*. Arguably, though, Short became a star in New York, where he first appeared on the 1984-85 season of *Saturday Night Live* and on Broadway.

Short has a Governor General's Performing Arts Award, a star on Canada's Walk of Fame and a Canada Post stamp among his laurels. He currently stars in the Emmy Award-winning TV series *Only Murders in the Building* with longtime friend and collaborator Steve Martin. Short was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2019. A documentary directed by Lawrence Kasdan (*The Big Chill*) on Short's life and comedy is in the works.

CLASS DISMISSED

One-room schoolhouses stand as testaments to the early days of public education.

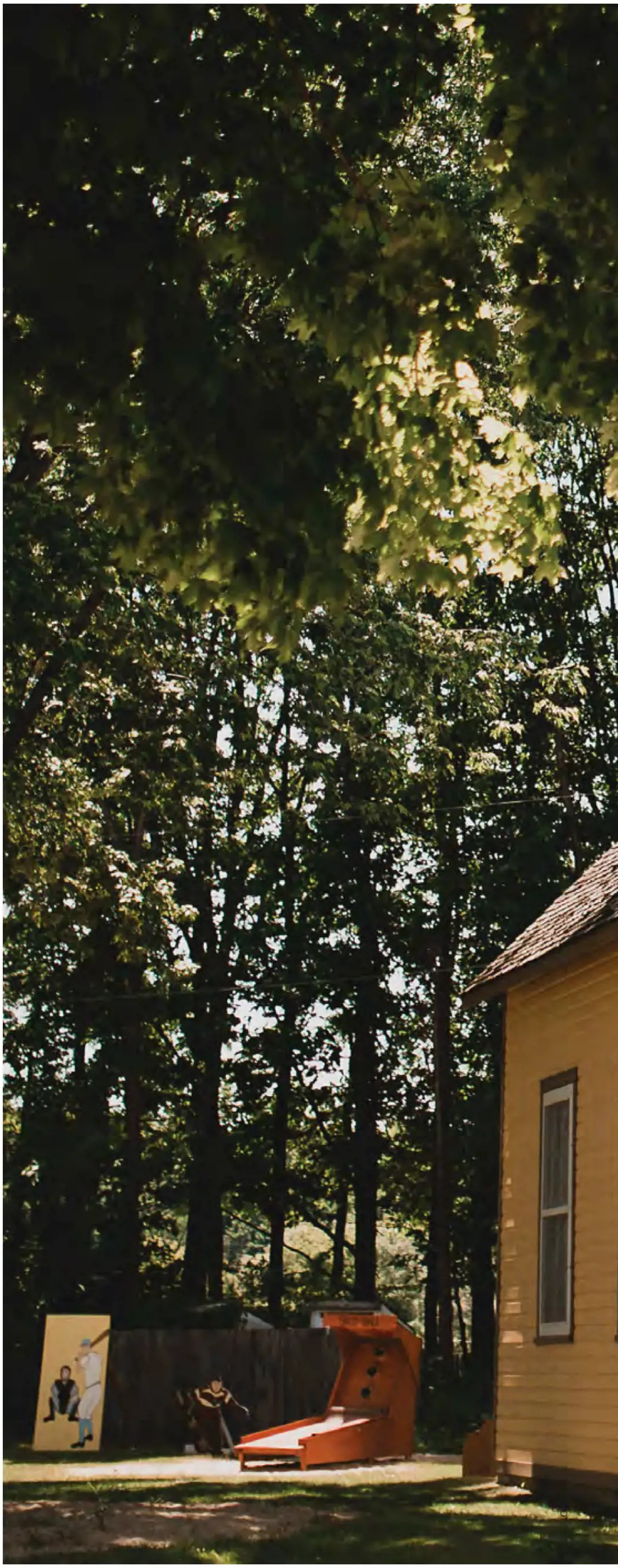
by Robert Gordon Currie

At one time, they dotted the landscape: rudimentary buildings, often painted white, free of luxuries like plumbing or electricity. Generations of Canadians learned their ABC's in one-room schools.

Often built on donated land with funds raised among neighbours, these schools became the centre of their communities. They hosted picnics, nail-driving contests, pie-eating competitions, thread-the-needle races, rowing matches and even pole-vaulting events. They were the venue for Christmas concerts, socials, dances, card parties and political meetings.

In 1871, 80 per cent of Canada's population lived in rural areas. By 1961, that number was down to only 30 per cent. Increasingly, rural kids were bused to larger schools in nearby towns, so the old one-room schools fell into disuse.

These days, most of the remaining one-room school buildings tend to be museums or community halls. In most instances, they were salvaged and restored by members of the community, often people who had once attended classes there. When these volunteers pass away, it's not clear who will take over the care of these lovely relics of time past.

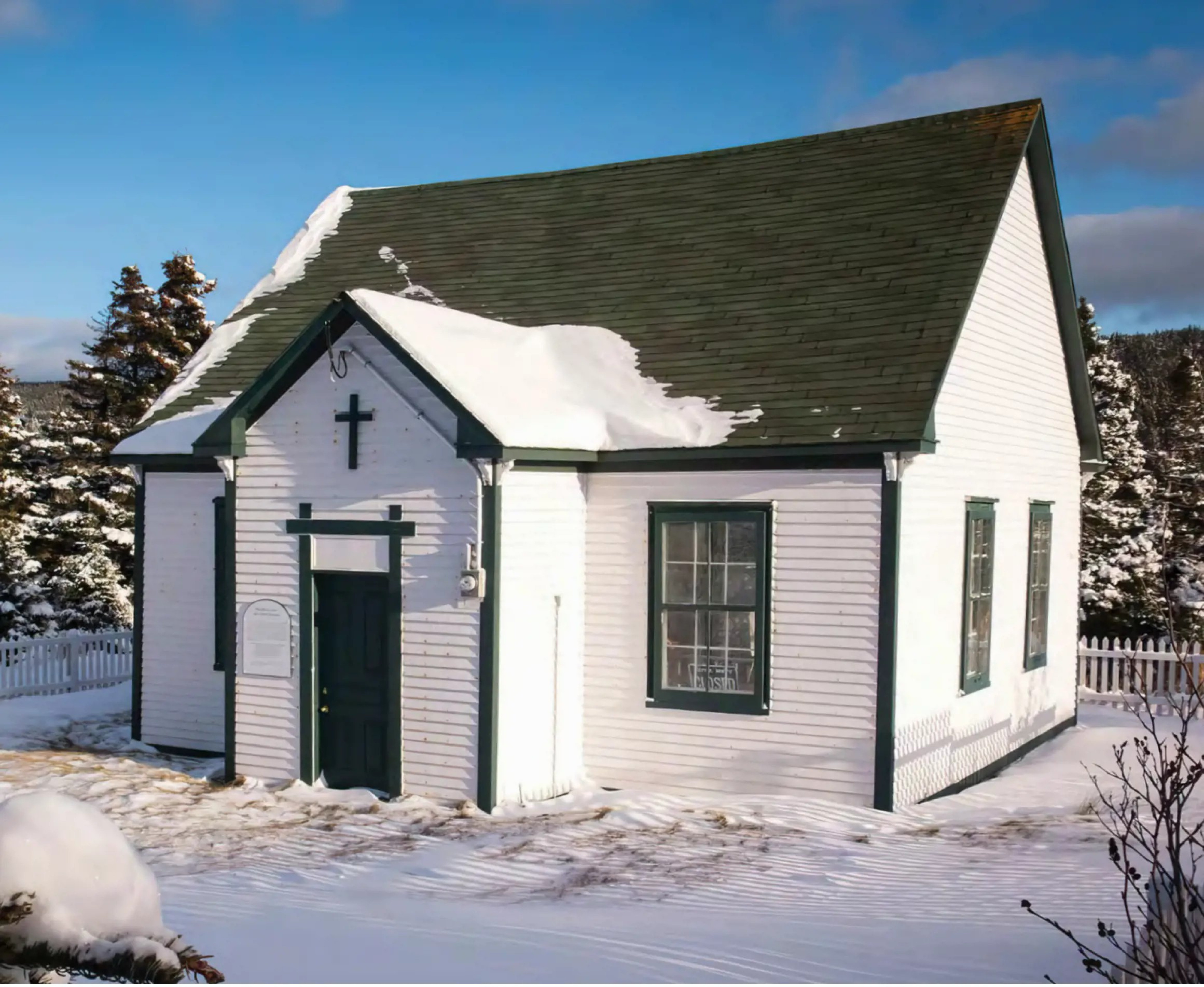


French Hill School
Cumberland Township, Ontario

French Hill School – formally known as S.S. (School Section) No. 1 Cumberland – was built in 1900, replacing an earlier log schoolhouse. In this community about 30 kilometres east of Ottawa, children from Grades 1 to 8 received their education mainly in English, although there was some French-language instruction. The school closed in 1936. In 1977, the building was moved to Cumberland Heritage Village Museum, where visitors can experience life in rural eastern Ontario in the 1920s and '30s.

CUMBERLAND
SS
NO.1
1900

JONATHAN KUHN



BLACKHEAD ONE ROOM SCHOOL & CHURCH MUSEUM

BLACKHEAD, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Bonita Ryan wants you to know that Blackhead is the easternmost community in North America. Cape Spear may be the easternmost point, but Blackhead — about 12 kilometres southeast of St. John's — is the easternmost community. At its peak, about 200 people called Blackhead home, most of them Catholic immigrants from southern Ireland.

The school, which sometimes doubled as a church, was built in 1879. One teacher, Mary Ellen Carter, took up her post at the age of 18. Besides their ABC's, she taught the girls knitting and embroidery, and she introduced French as a second language long before official bilingualism. Carter taught for 18 years until she met and married John Fitzgerald; married women were not allowed to work.

The school closed in 1965, and church services ended in 1989 as a result of dwindling attendance and a sex-abuse scandal. The building sat vacant until 1996, when Ryan and her neighbours formed a committee to save it, buying it from the archdiocese for one dollar. It's now open to the public on weekends in July and August.

BLACKHEAD ONE ROOM SCHOOL AND CHURCH MUSEUM

CANOE COVE SCHOOL

CANOE COVE, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Three years before creating his famous portrait of the Fathers of Confederation, artist Robert Harris captured a classroom scene in his 1880 painting *School House at Canoe Cove*.

Built around 1850, the school served a largely rural community on Prince Edward Island's south shore, populated by Scottish Presbyterians whose ancestors had emigrated during the Highland Clearances of 1750-1860.

In the early days, most of the students (and teachers) had names like McKinnon, MacEachern, McNeill and McDougall. The school record for July 2, 1884, shows that the teacher, Mr. MacNevin, had 64 students ranging in ages from six to 16, although only 38 were in attendance that day; during the summer months, kids were needed to help out around the farm.

The school closed in 1972, and students were bused into nearby Cornwall. The following year, the Canoe Cove Women's Institute bought the building and later renovated it with funds raised at yard sales and bake sales. It's now run by the Canoe Cove Community Association.

CANOE COVE SCHOOL.
EST. 1820
1066

Black Loyalist HERITAGE MUSEUM
131

TOP: ALAMY. BOTTOM: HERITAGE DIVISION, NS DEPT. OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

OLD BIRCHTOWN SCHOOL

BIRCHTOWN, NOVA SCOTIA

They came by the boatload to Shelburne, N.S. — Black Loyalists fleeing the United States. Between 1783 and 1785, more than 3,000 people arrived in what was then a British colony. Many of them stayed in the Shelburne area, creating a new community overlooking the harbour. It was the largest free Black community in North America.

A school for the Black children of Birchtown was established in 1785 with 36 students and Stephen Blucke, an influential community leader, as the teacher. The existing building, however, dates to the 1830s.

Jesse Corrigan, who works at the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre in Shelburne, attended the school before it closed in the 1960s. She recalls that it had separate entrances for boys and girls, a potbelly wood stove and an outhouse. By her time, there were both Black and white students. Classes only went up to Grade 6; for higher grades, the kids had to go to Shelburne.

KESWICK RIDGE
SUPERIOR SCHOOL

SOULANGES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

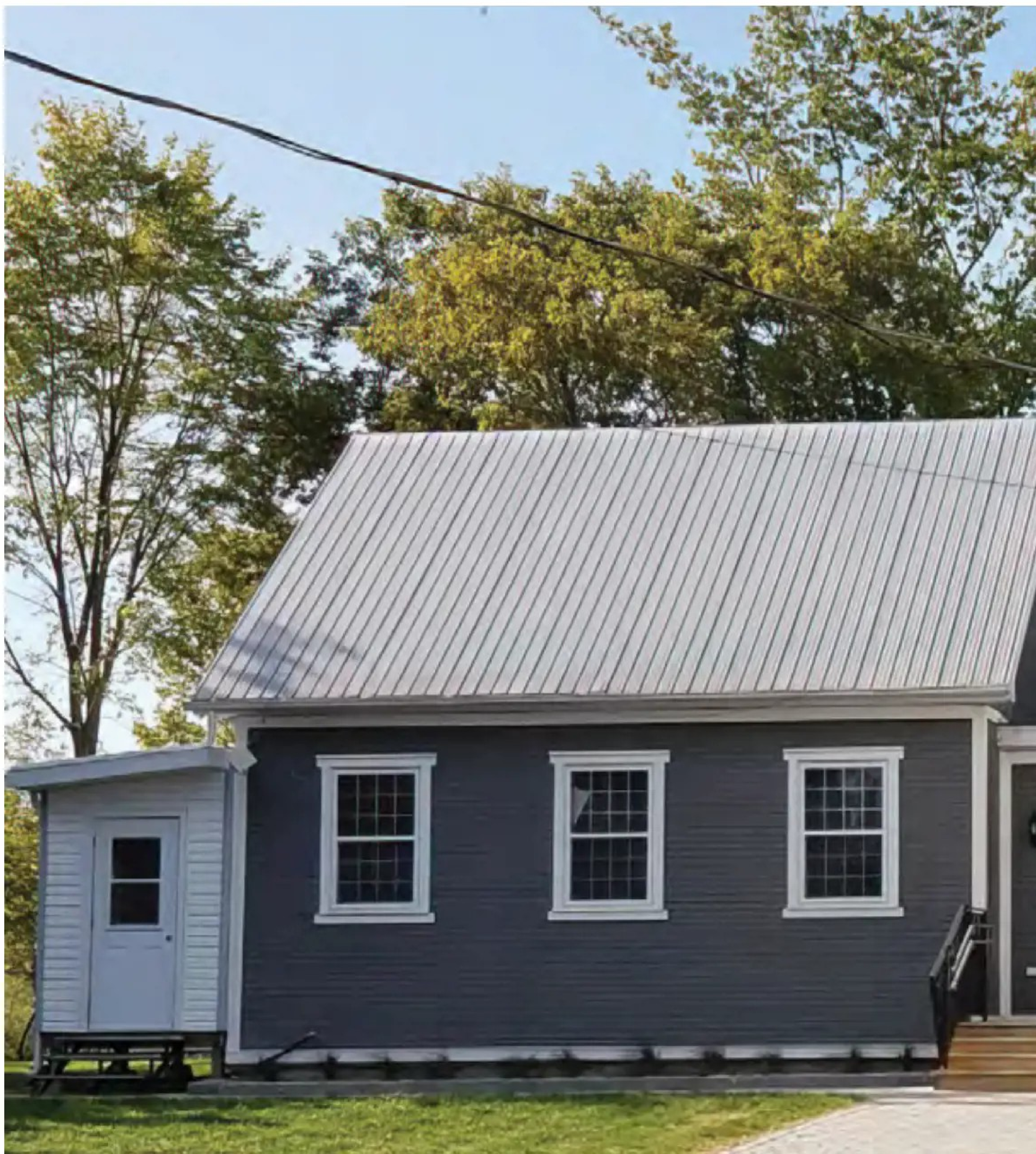
SAINT-TÉLESPHORE, QUEBEC

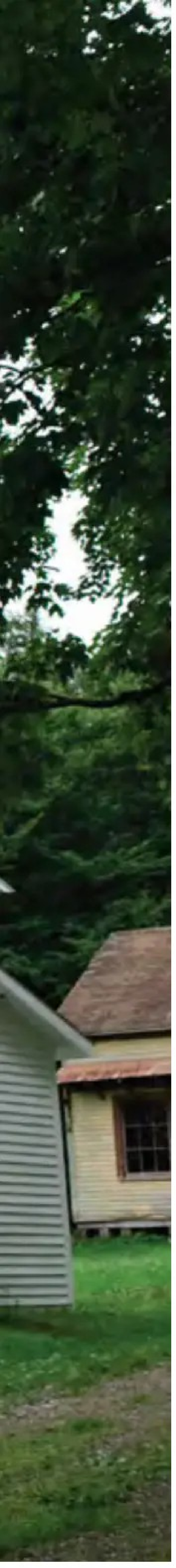
On school-year weekdays, 27 elementary-aged children flock to the bilingual Soulanges Elementary School. Marie-Helene Townshend teaches kindergarten to Grade 2 in the morning, while her English-speaking partner, Kate Clare, takes on the kids in Grades 3 to 6. In the afternoon, they switch.

"We end up being a little family where all the children are helping each other all the time," says Townshend.

Although there were two earlier schools in Saint-Télesphore, a rural community about 80 kilometres west of Montreal, the present building dates from 1919. It cost $1,900 to build, and the first teacher, Miss Cox, had 26 students in Grades 1 to 7.

For many years, it was a classic little white schoolhouse. But in 1997, with the threat of closure looming, parents and community members raised funds to build an addition. In 2018, the white siding was replaced with grey, but the bright-red doors were retained. It remains the cutest two-room school in the country.





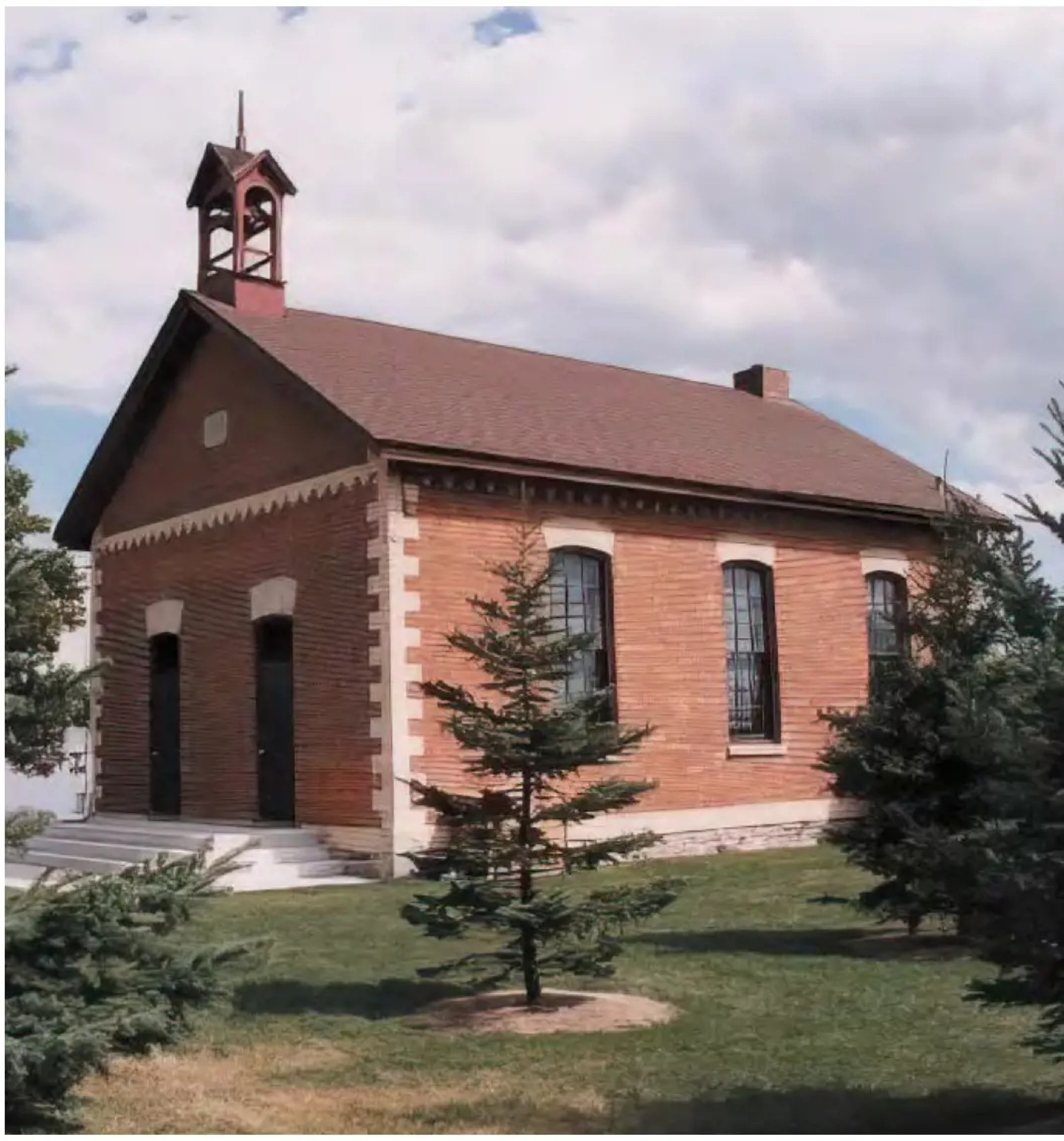
KESWICK RIDGE SUPERIOR SCHOOL

MCKEEN'S CORNER, NEW BRUNSWICK

Residents of the Keswick Ridge area in central New Brunswick wanted their children to be able to go beyond Grade 7, which meant they needed a "Superior" school. To qualify, the community required a minimum of 10 students in Grade 8 or higher, a building with two classrooms — one for the younger students and one for the older students — and a licensed teacher for each.

In 1885, three small school districts combined forces to meet those requirements. They built a school on donated land between McKeen's Corner and Keswick Ridge. The school continued to function until 1969, and turned out many accomplished graduates, including a future chancellor of the University of New Brunswick.

Thirty years after the school's closure, a group of concerned citizens formed the Keswick Ridge Historical Society and saved the building. It now serves as a community museum as well as headquarters of the historical society.



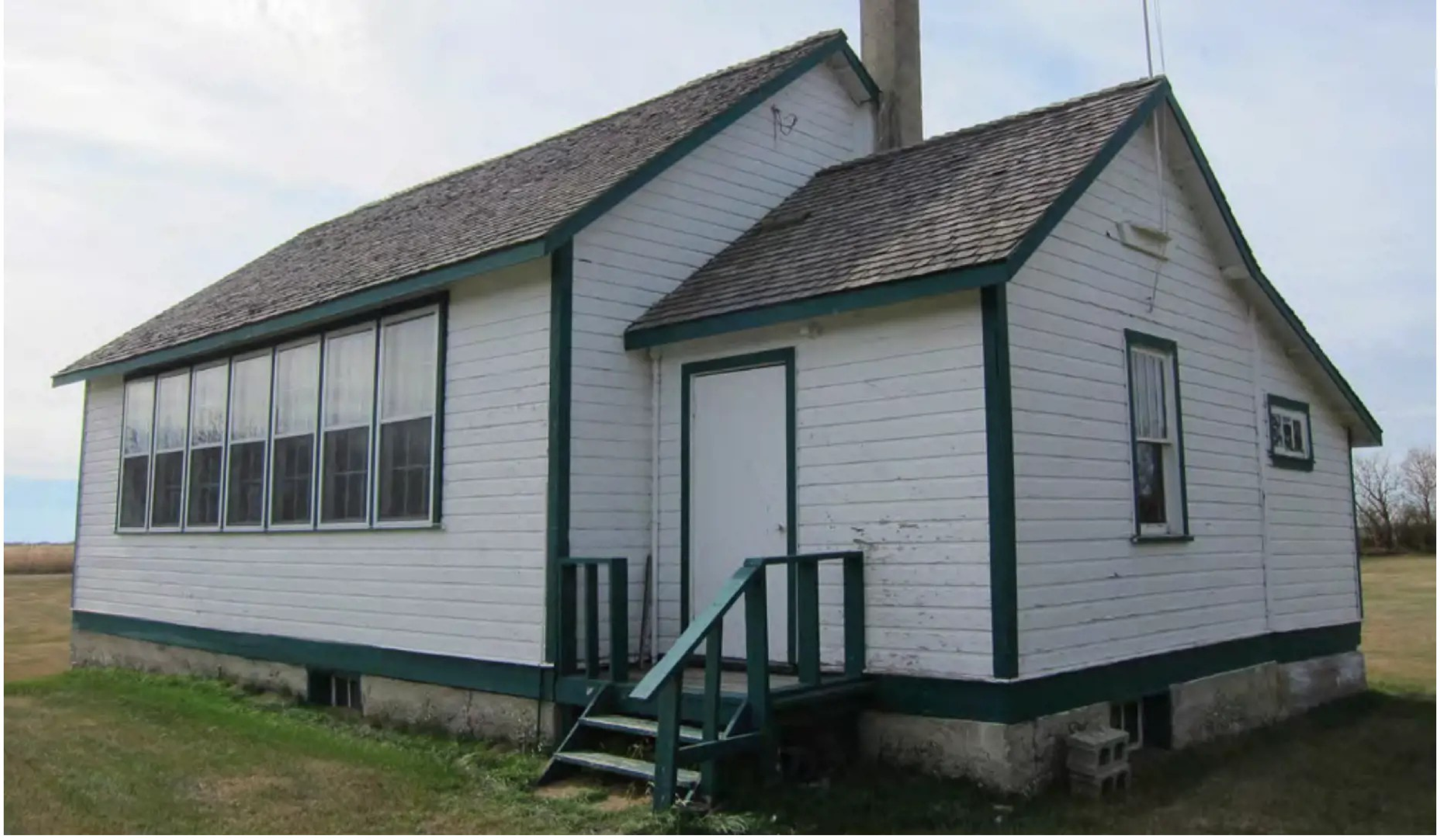
HISTORIC ZION SCHOOLHOUSE

TORONTO, ONTARIO

The Historic Zion Schoolhouse was built in 1864 in a farming community then known as L'Amoreaux, after Josue L'Amoreaux, a French Huguenot Loyalist who settled in the area. He was followed by a wave of Primitive Methodists — Protestant Christians who followed the original teachings of the sect's founder, John Wesley, including holding open-air meetings and allowing female ministry. It was they who built the red-brick school, naming it Zion — an Old Testament term meaning "holy place."

Zion Schoolhouse served the community until 1955, then sat empty until it was purchased by the City of North York (now part of Toronto) in 1963. It was restored by the North York Historical Board in 1986. Today, the little brick schoolhouse is surrounded by suburban Scarborough, a rare reminder of the area's rural past.

TOP LEFT: ALAMY B2RE40. TOP RIGHT: CITY OF TORONTO
LEFT: LESTER B. PEARSON'S SCHOOL BOARD



EUNOLA SCHOOL

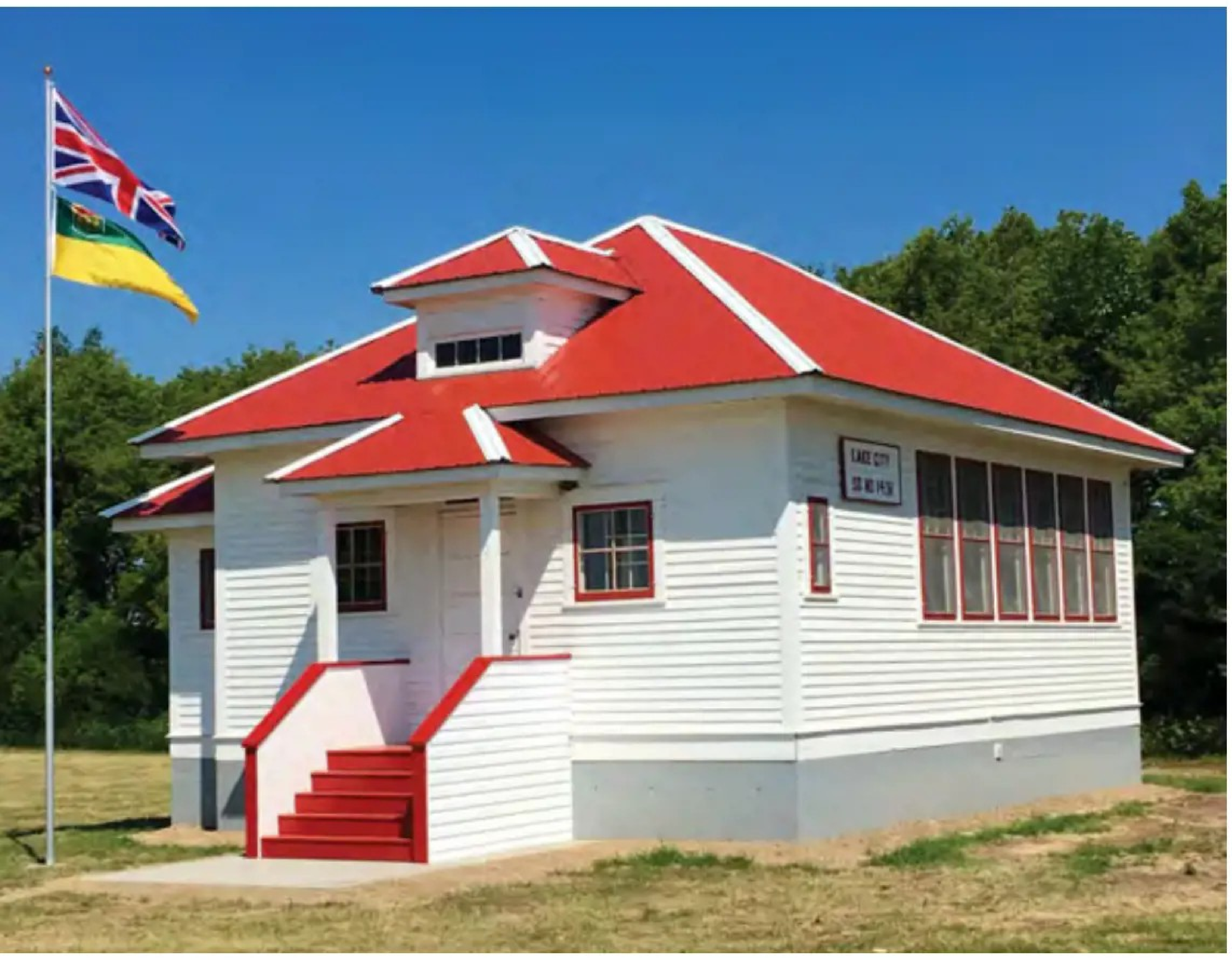
EDWARD, MANITOBA

Homesteaders in the aptly named Two Borders area of Manitoba — where the Canada-U.S. border meets the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border — gathered in George Munshell's granary in the spring of 1898 to organize the Eunola School District. They raised $508 to build the first school. That building burned down in the spring of 1937, but local residents had rebuilt it by fall.

The new building had windows along one side, high enough that students couldn't see outside while seated. The teacher's desk was a sturdy table with a drawer that held the register, for taking attendance, and a strap for punishing unruly students. On the front porch were benches, hooks for jackets and lunch boxes, along with a water pail and a dipper.

Initially, the school ran only during the summer months — and only to Grade 8. Students walked to school, often barefoot, requiring the teacher to tend to cuts and blisters from a small first-aid kit.

One teacher, Agnes Haight, was 16 years old and just out of normal school when she took over at Eunola School in 1906. She organized the first of many summer picnics and used her budget of $10 to import ice cream from nearby Pierson — a delicacy many of her students had never tasted before.



LAKE CITY SCHOOL

IMPERIAL, SASKATCHEWAN

Evan Gullacher lucked out. Lake City School was built in the 1930s along Last Mountain Lake, located on a corner of his family's farm. His walk to school was about 15 minutes; other kids walked for as much as an hour each way.

Gullacher attended the school for two years, until it closed in 1959, after which kids were sent into Imperial, roughly halfway between Regina and Saskatoon.

When the old school closed, Gullacher's father bought the acreage. The building stood empty until 2013, when the roof began to leak. Gullacher replaced the roof, restored the interior and moved the whole building onto a new foundation. His eldest son now lives on the farm. Gullacher lives in town but will take you on a tour of the school upon request.

TOP: DR. GORDON GOLDSBOROUGH; BOTTOM: EVAN GULLACHER

BEARSPAW SCHOOL

ROCKY VIEW COUNTY, ALBERTA

Opened on Aug. 3, 1920, Bearspaw School is northwest of Calgary on the traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy, now governed by Treaty 7. No First Nations children ever attended the school, but the area was named after Chief Masgwaahsid of the nearby Stoney-Nakoda nation, otherwise known as "Bearspaw."

The Bearspaw area was settled by dairy farmers who got together in 1919 to form School District No. 3851. It covered nearly 5,000 hectares and had a population of only 63 people, including 17 school-aged children. They purchased a site along the old Morley Trail for $99 and built a school with a capacity of 23 students.

The school operated until 1965, when children began to be bused into nearby Cochrane for classes.

Like many other one-room schools, the building was neglected and fell into disrepair — until the Bearspaw Historical Society did extensive renovations and reopened it in 2004.

LOCHIEL SCHOOLHOUSE

LANGLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

The original schoolhouse in Langley was built on land owned by the Biggar family and called the Biggar Prairie School. The local newspaper reported a successful picnic at the end of the 1891 school year, complete with bagpipes, games and dancing. Three years later, however, following a bitter dispute, the Cameron family renamed the school "Lochiel" after the chief of Clan Cameron in Scotland.

A new school was built in 1924 and was used until 1975, when vandals set it on fire. It sat empty until former teacher Pamela Graham persuaded the Langley Heritage Society to restore it. It was eventually moved to a new home in Campbell Valley Regional Park.

The Langley Heritage Society has now restored 30 buildings in the area just south of Vancouver.

TOP: BEARSPAW HISTORICAL SOCIETY; BOTTOM: BENJAMIN MADISON

Natural selection

This National Heritage Site has beauty in spades.

by Waheeda Harris

Above: Elsie Reford in her gardens, circa 1935.

Opposite page: Reford intended "The Long Walk" to be the gardens' horticultural masterpiece.

OPPOSITE PAGE: JEAN-CHRISTOPHE LEMAY/LES AMIS DES JARDINS DE MÉTIS COLLECTION.
RIGHT: ROBERT W. REFORD/LES AMIS DES JARDINS DE MÉTIS COLLECTION

It's a sunny autumn day as I travel along the picturesque Gaspé Peninsula, my vehicle hugging the shoreline of the steady St. Lawrence River. Although this region is alluring at any time of the calendar, the fall months are particularly pretty along autoroute 132 as the trees begin their seasonal transformation.

The Gaspésie (as the locals fondly refer to it) is well known for its wilderness parks — especially the Percé UNESCO Global Geopark, with its venerable geological sites. But in the Bas-Saint-Laurent is another gem: Reford Gardens (les Jardins de Métis), a former-fishing-camp-turned-remarkable-garden created by feminist and philanthropist Elsie Reford.

Reford was born Elsie Meighen on Jan. 22, 1872, in Perth, Ont. Her father, Robert Meighen, was president of the Lake of the Woods Milling Company, then the maker of Five Roses flour, which, at its height, was said to be the largest flour mill in the British Empire. Her mother, Elsie Stephen, was the sister of George Stephen, the first president of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Elsie married Robert Wilson Reford, heir to the Robert Reford Company Ltd., a shipping and importing company. Living in Montreal's Golden Square Mile, the Refords entertained politicians, industrialists and scientists, and they became well-known art collectors focused on European and Canadian art. After Elsie Reford underwent surgery at age 54, her doctor recommended she consider gardening during her recovery — and an obsession was born.

Located 300 kilometres northeast of Quebec City, Reford Gardens was a labour of love for Reford. Between 1926 and 1958, she worked with a team of locals to transform 20 acres (eight hectares) of spruce forest into 15 different gardens that are home to 3,000 varieties of plants — both endemic and those sourced from around the globe, including the Himalayan blue poppy, primulas and gentian.

This blooming feat required importing large quantities of flower bulbs and figuring out how to acclimatize them to Canadian conditions. But Reford prevailed and earned not only a garden with lilies but also a byline for articles she wrote

Top: The picturesque coastal town of Percé. Bottom: Estevan Lodge offers Reford Gardens visitors locally sourced meals.

TOP: ALAMY 2AKB9N0. BOTTOM LEFT: MARJELAINE SYLVESTRE LES AMIS DES JARDINS DE MÉTIS COLLECTION.

IF YOU GO

Located between the Gaspé Peninsula towns of Matane and Rimouski on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, Reford Gardens is open seasonally from June until the end of October. Tickets range from $11 to $23, plus taxes, for adults and students; children under age 13 have free access.

A trail through the gardens is open year-round, but there are no services available from November until the end of May. Service animals are permitted, and small dogs or cats can be brought on property, but only if they're confined to pet carriers or wagons.

The closest airport and Via Rail train station are both in nearby Mont-Joli. Visitors can also access the gardens via Rte 132. Reford Gardens are 3½ hours northeast of Quebec City and 5½ hours northeast of Montreal.

on her process for the North American Lily Society and the United Kingdom's Royal Horticultural Society.

Open to the public since 1962, Reford Gardens hosts the International Garden Festival from June to October. Recognized as one of the most important contemporary garden festivals in North America, the event features roughly 20 gardens created by approximately 70 local and international landscape architects from various disciplines.

For the average visitor, though, flowers make up a kind of welcoming committee at the entrance of Reford Gardens, easily luring guests to discover floral varieties in every shade imaginable. Trees act as friendly sentries, delineating the spaces between several themed gardens. From small white flowers with yellow centres to clumps of baby-pink and deep-red blooms planted between old railroad tracks to contemporary sculptures complementing and contrasting with the ever-changing landscape, these special spaces will inspire both amateur and professional gardeners.

Spruce and horse chestnut trees line the gardens' outer edges, and seemingly every shade of green — from pale lime to deep hunter — is on display from the leaves and bushes. There's a welcome calm when wandering the paths, where shaded areas provide a cool respite on sunny days. One imagines Reford would be thrilled to see the gardens thriving, with numerous visitors regularly exploring the flora almost 60 years after her death in 1967.

Historian Alexander Reford, Elsie's great-grandson, has been the gardens' director since 1995. He's committed to both the land and to highlighting his great-grandmother's numerous achievements, including through the books *The Reford Gardens: Elsie's Paradise* and *Treasures of the Reford Gardens: Elsie's Floral Legacy*. Those achievements include co-founding the Women's Canadian Club of Montreal in 1907 to encourage women to get involved in politics and working at the Montreal Maternity Hospital (now part of the McGill University Health Centre) to promote the health of women and children.

Reford Gardens became a National Historic Site in 1995 and a Quebec heritage site in 2013. The gardens were also the subject of *Il était deux fois un jardin/Twice Upon a Garden*, a documentary about Reford by Montreal filmmaker Philippe Baylaucq.

In 2024, Reford was added to the Répertoire du patrimoine culturel du Québec as a designated historical figure on International Women's Day, and Les Éditions Umanium published *Elsie Reford: 150 Objects of Passion*, a book celebrating her life through stories and archival photographs of 150 personal objects.

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† Fondly remembered

Canada's National History Society Impact Report 2024-25

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & THE CHAIR

Melony Ward (left)
President & CEO

Natasha Pashak (right)
Chair, Board of Directors

This year, generous contributions from our donors helped Canadians of all ages explore the stories of our past.

History education has never been more important than it is now. If today's young people are to transcend the easy answers of social media to become tomorrow's informed, engaged and caring citizens, they need an understanding of how our country came to be — the forces that continue to shape it, the stories of others, the challenging times and the proud achievements. We believe that history education is the cornerstone of an informed and engaged citizenry. Our work with young people to learn about and connect with Canada's history is one of the most meaningful things we do. With the resources we provide, students discover the things that interest them about our past, to explore all aspects of our history and to reflect on what it means. By helping create a common understanding, we are also helping to counter misinformation while building awareness and empathy. No matter their age, the more Canadians understand our diverse and complicated history, the more connected they will be to one another and to the country we share. We are honoured to support and celebrate the work of the teachers, historians, community volunteers and museum professionals shining a light on that history for all of us.

HISTORY IS FOR EVERYONE

CANADA'S HISTORY
BATTLE OF BERLIN
CANADIAN AIRMEN AT WAR
LERANCE OR TYRANNY?
DESPERADO
CANADIAN PEARL HART WAS THE BADDEST WOMAN OF THE AMERICAN WEST
OME ON THE PLAINS
BEAVER TALES
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS AS OUR NATIONAL SYMBOL

As we move into our second century of publishing, our magazine and website provide a treasure trove of Canadian stories.

Anyone looking for thoughtful articles, great writing and an approach to our past that includes the traditional and the challenging knows *Canada's History* is the magazine of choice. This year saw Jacqueline Kovacs take on the role of editorial director; she brings a wealth of experience in the magazine industry along with a keen eye for a good story well presented. The team at *Canada's History* is working on redesigning the magazine's look to ensure that it stays fresh for our devoted readership, which includes a high proportion of younger folks and people who are relatively new to our country. For instance, although millennials make up about 28 per cent of the Canadian population, they represent 40 per cent of the magazine's readers. Visitors to our website can dive into Canada's History Archive, featuring *The Beaver* and *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*, which contains more than a century's worth of articles and images. Our active and judicious social media presence points followers to timely stories, and our regular newsletters highlight related material from previous magazines as well as current topics for those interested in exploring Canada's fascinating past.

Canada's National History Society mission

Our vision is a Canada where people are connected through history. We help strengthen understanding of the complex and diverse histories of our country and their part in shaping contemporary Canada through our education, publishing and recognition programs.

Canada's National History Society receives support from individuals, foundations, corporate donors, sponsorships, subscriptions, advertising revenue and government funding. To ensure that donor contributions have the greatest possible impact, we keep management and fundraising expenses low. As a result, 87 per cent of our expenses are directly related to charitable activities. The work of informing and inspiring Canadians about their history is only possible because of donations. This report shows how donor support is helping achieve our shared goals and holds us to account along the way.

3 million+

people connect to the work of Canada's National History Society

Digitally and in print, *Canada's History* magazine attracts the majority of this audience, continuing a century of excellence. The editorial team's work has achieved recognition from the National Magazine Awards, the Canadian Online Publishing Awards, the Publisher Podcast Awards and the Canadian Ethnic Media Association.

We believe in print publications while also ensuring that we reach a wide range of people on a variety of digital platforms. For instance, more than 25,000 people have signed up to receive our general interest history newsletter. Of our total audience, more than 925,000 were born outside Canada.

Praise for *Canada's History*

> **"In these troubling times, it's a great comfort to receive my regular edition of *Canada's History*. I commend the entire team for publishing these remarkable stories of Canada's historical legacy, not always perfect but nonetheless admirable as one of the world's most lasting and successful democracies.... Your publication serves our country well in this period of global stress."**
>
> – *Canada's History* subscriber, Toronto

260

laureates since the awards' inception

This year's 12 new Governor General's History Award recipients join a community of inquisitive, generous history lovers who continue to share their expertise and knowledge. Awards are presented for excellence in teaching, scholarly research, museums, popular history and community programming.

Laureates' experiences

"History is everything, not simply because of context but because as human beings, as social beings, our desire for dignity, our desire for certain rights, our desire to affirm who we are and from whence we came are all rooted in our capacity to tell the world who we are and to articulate our experiences."

– Wendell Nii Laryea Adjetey, 2024 recipient of the Governor General's History Award for Scholarly Research

"It was an amazing whirlwind meeting some exceptional historians and educators. Thank you to Canada's National History Society for the opportunity to participate in an excellent program."

– Janet Reid,curator, Markham Museum, co-recipient of the 2024 Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming

17.5%

increase in participation in Heritage Fairs

Creating a Heritage Fair project gives students an exciting way to explore a question about Canada's history that piques their curiosity. The teachers who help them develop those research and reflection skills appreciate the support we provide. This year, we distributed more than 1,400 Heritage Fair classroom kits to teachers all over the country, with about 65 per cent of those educators participating for the first time. We look forward to even more growth in the years ahead.

Regional reports

"We doubled the number of student participants."

"[We saw] increased Indigenous student participation and overall number of Indigenous history and culture-themed projects being presented. Record-high number of Heritage Fair projects presented in French."

"Another success was providing students with the opportunity for higher-level thinking by implementing the historical thinking concepts into their projects."

"We received positive feedback from all of the parents whose children participated."

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S HISTORY AWARDS

We celebrate and connect those who lift up Canada's stories.

For the first time, these annual awards were held somewhere other than one of the official residences of the Governor General of Canada. The Canada's History team overseeing the awards worked with Rideau Hall as well as Manitoba's Government House to present this prestigious program in Winnipeg. We were honoured that the lieutenant-governor of Manitoba, the Hon. Anita Neville, hosted the ceremonies at which the Right Hon. Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada, presented the awards to glowing recipients. Both stayed afterward to meet and chat with the delighted guests. The whirlwind of events in Winnipeg the previous day included the memorable Governor General's History Symposium. This thought-provoking conversation explored the idea of fostering understanding and empathy through inclusive history. In the evening, history enthusiasts from all over Canada mingled and made new connections at a celebratory gala at the historic Fort Garry Hotel.

SPOTLIGHT ON HERITAGE FAIRS

More students are displaying their interest in Canada's history.

It's impossible not to be captivated by the participants in a Heritage Fair. These students, generally between the ages of 10 and 14, choose an aspect of Canada's history that interests them, research it and create a display. Their enthusiasm bubbles up as they answer questions from judges and visitors. Students with outstanding projects can participate in Heritage Fairs at the level of their school district, and then to a provincial or territorial fair. After years of virtual-only fairs, participation is bouncing back. This year saw an impressive increase in the number of students who took part in 30 regional and provincial/territorial fairs. Canada's History provides practical guidance, both in French and English, in print and digitally, for teachers interested in having their students participate in a Heritage Fair. We send ribbons, magazines, posters and other items to encourage students, and we provide professional development to help teachers bring Heritage Fairs to their classrooms. In 2024, four students from across Canada who turned their Heritage Fair projects into videos received national recognition as Young Citizens as part of a national showcase at the Governor General's History Awards celebrations. Each laureate also received a $500 contribution to a registered education savings plan (RESP).

HISTORY FOR YOUNG CANADIANS

Kayak
Electrifying
Life before electricity
Kayak
LES ÉLECTIONS AU CANADA
Kayak
BLACK HISTORY IN CANADA
Women leading the way
Working on the railway
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
LISTENING TO SURVIVORS
History

We bring our country's fascinating history to vivid life.

There's nothing else quite like the publications we create for Canadian students. Each issue of *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids/Navigue dans l'histoire du Canada* explores a subject through fact, fiction, an original comic and more for readers aged seven to 12. The theme might complement existing curriculum materials on major subjects such as elections and how Canada adopted electricity or offer an in-depth look at anything from agricultural fairs to ancient versus new snow technology. Thanks to a generous sponsor, for several years we have reprinted the special "Black History in Canada" issue annually to meet demand, which is also high for the Truth and Reconciliation Week publication we create under the leadership of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. *What's the Story?/Quelle histoire !* gives older students an accessible guide to historical inquiry, something that hadn't existed before.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS IN CHANGING TIMES

We equip teachers for complex conversations.

As our understanding of Canada's history deepens and broadens, educators are working hard to incorporate a wide range of perspectives and challenge their students to think both critically and empathetically about how the country they know has come to be. It's a big job, especially given all the other expectations placed on teachers in a rapidly changing learning environment. We are here to help these dedicated professionals by connecting them through our national networks to others who care as much as they do. They can take part in webinars such as the six-part Virtual Historical Thinking Institute, which highlights the six foundational ways of looking at history. They can download lesson plans built around our magazines for youth and adults. Perhaps most important of all, they can rest assured that they are not alone in the essential work of educating those who will one day lead Canada.

755,000

copies distributed of our publications for youth

At a time when young people are inundated with digital information, print magazines have become an innovative way for students to engage with the stories of Canada. Our enjoyable, accessible publications provide hands-on learning that teachers appreciate. For instance, it took just two weeks for all 225,000 copies of *Kayak*'s special issue on Black history to be reserved in advance of Black History Month. Knowing that a federal election was coming, we did a second printing of the "Choosing Our Leaders" issue of *Kayak* to help teachers talk about the electoral process with their students.

Praise for *Kayak*

"Thank you, Canada's History, for offering these great free resources for classrooms!"

– classroom teacher

"Merci beaucoup pour les exemplaires de *Kayak*. Les visiteurs vont beaucoup apprécier je crois!"

– Centre des mémoires montréalaises

"Love the magazines as a homeschool group."

– homeschool teacher

25,820

educators have signed up to receive our newsletters

Teachers, homeschoolers and museum outreach staff from all over Canada appreciate our custom newsletters, available in English and French. These publications help educators expand their own knowledge and take advantage of thoughtful, up-to-date learning resources, from lesson plans to professional development events for social studies and history.

Teachers' testimony

"Teaching is not an easy profession, but we have a great responsibility to ensure that the youth of today, especially in the field of history, have an understanding of where we've been to help them solve the challenges and dilemmas of the future."

– Connie Shea, Saint John, N.B.,
recipient of 2024 Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching

"We are really excited about the resources put out by Canada's History and looking forward to incorporating them into our outreach activities and next year's Heritage Fair. Continue developing more resources along these lines!"

– Janae Redgrave, Galt Museum & Archives

Canada's National History Society Honour Roll

This year, generous individuals, corporations, foundations and governments kept history alive by contributing a total of $2,998,166 to Canada's National History Society. We sincerely thank all supporters. Gifts of $100 or more have been recognized in this honour roll.

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We thank you, our supporters, for helping us to achieve our urgent mission.
We believe in holding ourselves and our work to account, and with this report we share the impact of your support.

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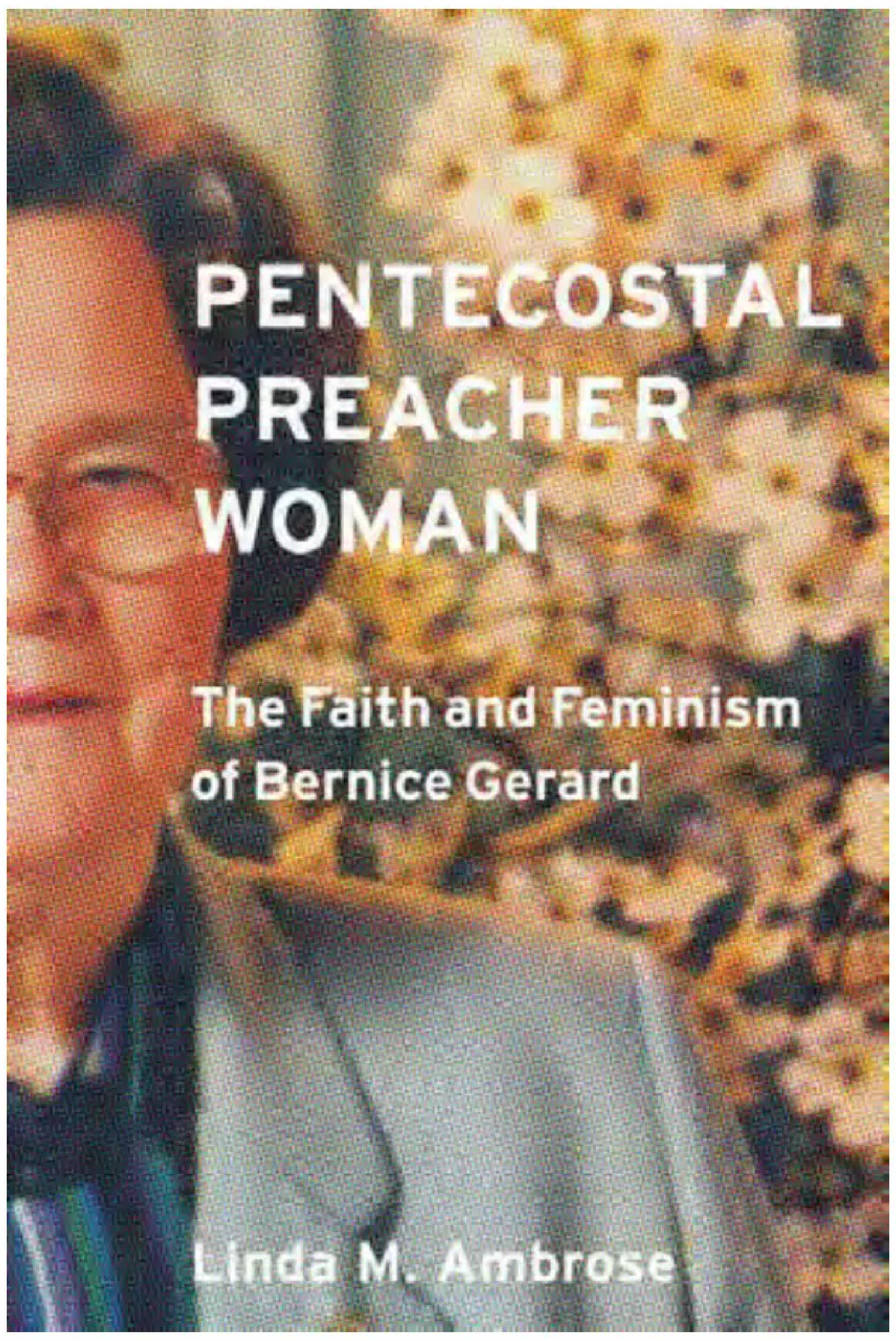


PRAIRIE PASTOR

Pentecostal Preacher Woman: The Faith and Feminism of Bernice Gerard

by Linda M. Ambrose
UBC Press, 320 pages, $37.95

Outside of British Columbia, Bernice Gerard's name may not be familiar to most Canadians. However, Gerard spent many years in the public eye in B.C., where she was admired by some and despised by others. As a charismatic Pentecostal pastor, a colourful city alderwoman and a popular radio talk-show host with a booming baritone voice, Gerard had a big presence.

"While some judge her as a hero of the faith and a successful model for women in ministry, others dismiss her as a rigid and outdated public figure who was easily caricatured," writes Linda M. Ambrose in *Pentecostal Preacher Woman*. "The truth about Gerard and women like her is far more complicated."

Born into poverty in rural B.C. in 1923, Gerard was sexually abused by her alcoholic adoptive father, rescued when she was 13, and raised in a succession of foster homes. Yet, she grew up to be a confident, independent woman of influence. How did this happen? Gerard credited a pair of travelling women evangelists she met as a child. She said these "preacher ladies" gave her a sense that she belonged and was loved. They also helped her escape her abusive home life.

Ambrose describes how the wheels of B.C.'s fledgling social-welfare system turned in the 1930s. Social workers recognized that this bright adolescent girl had potential, and no lesser person than the province's superintendent of child welfare, Isobel Harvey, took a special interest in Gerard. Harvey was part of a new breed of professional social worker — mostly women — who brought children out of Victorian-style orphanages and into more homelike foster care.

Gerard received a good education and began a career as a schoolteacher. However, it wasn't long before she met another pair of travelling women evangelists who changed the course of her life. Sisters Velma and Jean McColl were part of a unique phenomenon of the time — women from emerging Christian revival movements pairing up to preach and sing gospel tunes.

Gerard quit teaching to join the sisters on the road as part of the McColl-Gerard Trio. Ordained as Pentecostal ministers in the United States, they worked as a team from 1945 until 1958, filling tents and church halls across North America and Europe.

The trio split up when the McColls settled down to marry. Gerard stayed single, but in an unusual domestic arrangement, she lived with Velma and her husband, Dick Chapman, in their Vancouver home. The two women continued living together after Chapman died and were, in fact, inseparable.

Gerard became a campus chaplain at both the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University in the turbulent 1960s and '70s. With her gravelly voice, she was a natural for radio, and she hosted a late-night call-in show with CJOR in Vancouver. Her media exposure helped get her elected to Vancouver City Hall, where she served from 1977 to 1981.

The world of politics was not kind to Gerard. The media mocked her as severe, frumpy and humourless for her unwavering efforts to impose public morality by fighting the spread of nudity on public beaches.

By contrast, Ambrose's portrayal of Gerard is sympathetic. The author, a professor of history at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ont., describes Gerard's conservative thinking as nuanced and more open than it at first appears. Gerard's views, while never liberal, broadened over time. When debate opened up in the 1970s about ordaining women as ministers in Canada, Gerard found herself fighting against her own church, which had accepted women in ministry for its first 50 years but was hardening its rules in a backlash against a perceived threat of feminism.

Still, she remained hugely popular in the evangelical movement, and in 2000, eight years before her death, Gerard was rated first on a list of influential B.C. spiritual leaders compiled by the *Vancouver Sun* in consultation with academics.

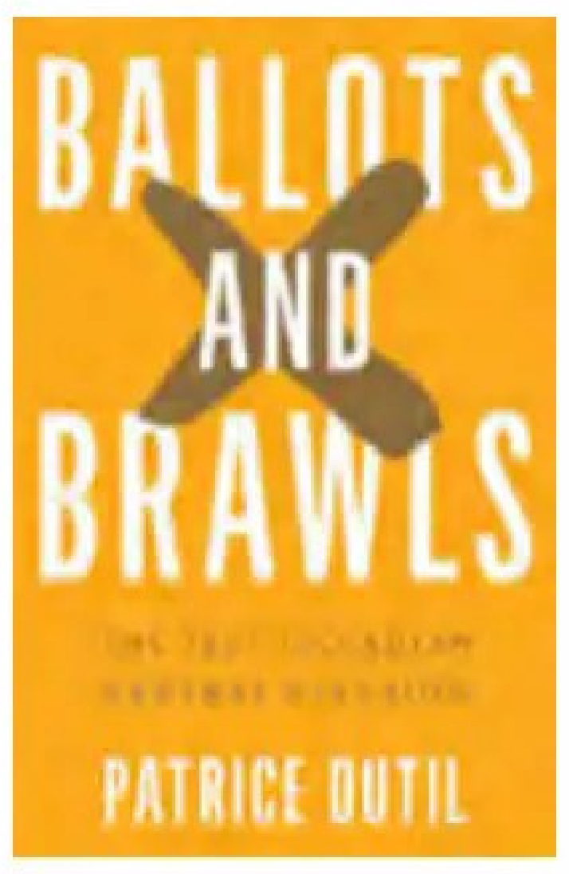
In writing the biography of one particular woman, Ambrose reveals much about the backdrop of social history that unfolded during Gerard's lifetime. And as the jacket blurb says, Gerard's "complicated blend of social conservatism and social compassion has lessons for our polarized times."

Reviewed by **Nelle Oosterom**, a frequent contributor to *Canada's History*.

FIRST PARLIAMENT

Ballots and Brawls: The 1867 Canadian General Election

by Patrice Dutil
UBC Press, 308 pages,
$27.95 paperback



Canada came into being on July 1, 1867, and a caretaker cabinet led by John A. Macdonald was sworn in that very day. But what about an election? How did Canadians elect a federal Parliament where there had been none before?

Rather easily, in fact. By relying on the constituencies and voting rules of the four founding provinces, the federal government launched an election campaign barely a month after Confederation. Voting was completed and results declared in 181 constituencies by late September. When the first Parliament met early in November, Prime Minister Macdonald led about 100 MPs against a feisty opposition of about 80.

Patrice Dutil is a prolific author who clearly loves 19th-century Canadian politics. For this first book-length history of the 1867 election, he quotes liberally from the lurid (and often plausible) accusations of fraud, corruption and vote-buying that filled the era's furiously partisan newspapers. In hotly contested constituencies, voting was often spread across several days, with rival candidates and their supporters encouraged to arrive at the polls on different dates. The idea, though not always successful, was to discourage them from fighting.

Open voting — without secret ballots or closed voting booths — still prevailed in most provinces. Voters, still all men, had to stand up and call out their choice in public, at the risk of getting hit on the head for it. Yet, turnout among eligible voters was an impressive 75 per cent. Amid local rivalries and prejudices, voters elected a lasting Parliament from a tangle of Liberals and Conservatives, including both pro- and anti-Confederates.

Some of Dutil's claims about Canada in the 1860s seem as disputable as those of the newspapers he quotes. He tells us this was "a completely undemocratic election" since only about 15 per cent of the population could vote. But in 1867, two-thirds of the population was underage, and a still profoundly patriarchal society disqualified half of the remainder as women. We would not tolerate that today, but 15 per cent meant nearly every adult, non-Indigenous man could vote. That gave Canada possibly the broadest electoral franchise in the world at the time, and one that kept MPs accountable — a hallmark of democracy.

Dutil proposes Confederation was "*a coup de force* … from the business community and the British establishment." More plausibly, it arose from a series of Canadian constitutional conferences whose consensus recommendations were ratified by legislative majorities in every participating province — and provinces that chose not to join were free to remain outside.

Dutil is very harsh on Ontario reformer George Brown, whom he constantly assails as an anti-French bigot. Brown did love to denounce the "state-churchism" of Quebec's powerful Catholic clergy. But those who accused him of francophobia were mainly people who benefited from the clergy's efforts to control how Quebecers voted. Arguing in favour of Quebecers' right to make political decisions free of clerical interference did not make Brown anti-French.

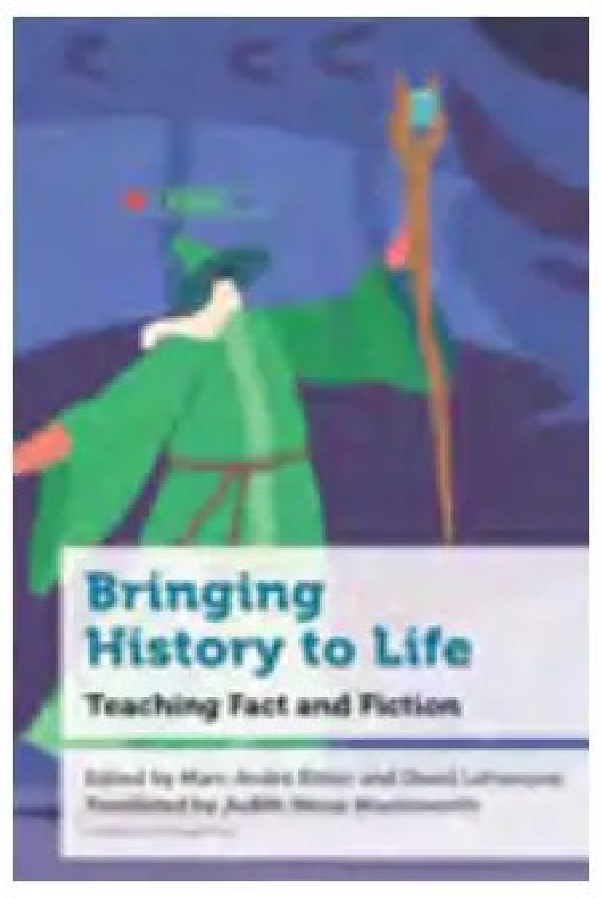
John A. Macdonald, Dutil's hero, emerges as Canada's first national political strategist, skilfully assembling blocs of support in each province to win the election while his rivals, including Brown, remained mostly local, lacking a national message. Even in 1867, strong leaders won at the ballot box.

Reviewed by **Christopher Moore,** a contributing editor at *Canada's History* and the author of *1867: How the Fathers Made a Deal.*

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Bringing History to Life: Teaching Fact and Fiction

edited by Marc-André Éthier and
David Lefrançois
translated by Judith Weisz Woodsworth
University of Ottawa Press,
323 pages, $44.95



As a kid in the 1990s, there was nothing more exciting to me than seeing a teacher wheel in the old television cart. It was time to turn down the lights, sit back and watch a movie. Regardless of the subject area, the educational value of these flicks was often dubious at best; however, in *Bringing History to Life*, editors Marc-André Éthier and David Lefrançois show that popular history can provide valuable teaching tools if students are encouraged to engage critically with the material. In the book's 14 chapters, a variety of authors explore the opportunities and limitations of a range of popular history media — including films, music and video games — as well as public history institutions such as museums and historic sites.

Disparaging the passive viewing experiences of my school days, the contributors to this collection emphasize that movies and other sources of popular history should be questioned and evaluated. Students should ask: What choices did the creators make? What perspectives are included or left out? What methodologies shape these narratives? By doing so, they can develop a more nuanced understanding of the past and of the nature of historical storytelling.

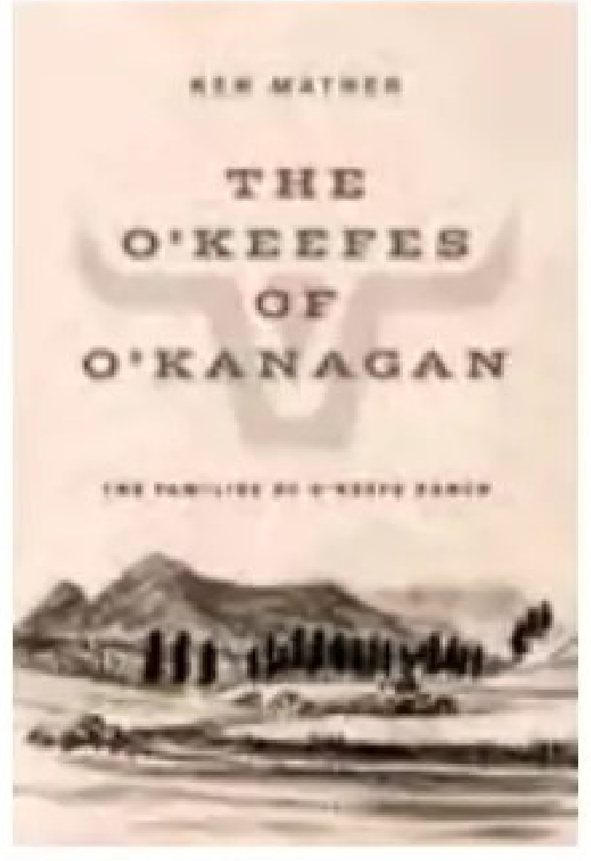
Originally published in French, this translated edition brings rich research and case studies from Quebec, a perspective often overlooked in English-language discussions on history education. While the academic prose can be dense at times, the book offers practical insights for educators looking to harness the power of popular and public history in the classroom.

Reviewed by **Joanna Dawson**, director of programs at Canada's National History Society.

COWBOY DYNASTY

The O'Keefes of O'Kanagan: The Families of O'Keefe Ranch

by Ken Mather
Heritage House, 332 pages, $34.95



When people imagine the romantic ranching country of Canada, their thoughts often turn to Alberta — not to British Columbia's fruit-growing Okanagan valley. However, the O'Keefe Ranch, situated at the north end of Okanagan Lake, was a vigorous economic and community force in Canada's cattle and grain business from the late 19th to the mid-20th centuries. Ken Mather shares the ranch's impact and the family's story in his newest book.

There is no one on the planet better suited to write this book than Mather. He is an avid storyteller regarding Canadian cowboys, ranching and horse-centred communities. Plus, in 1984, he became the manager and curator of the Historic O'Keefe Ranch heritage site. He understands the human geography of the ranch and has long-standing personal connections and relationships with the O'Keefe family.

The tale begins with Cornelius O'Keefe's father, Michael, a poor Irish immigrant coming to Canada in 1819. Using a combination of conjecture and fact, Mather weaves the foundational story of the O'Keefe family's early immigrant years in Upper Canada. He paints an informative picture of life in Nepean, Ont., and shows how Cornelius's experiences galvanized his wanderlust to seek his fortune in British Columbia. From there, the story rests upon the main character, Cornelius, who became adept in the cattle business and eventually established his thriving eponymous ranch.

Through 52 years of booms and busts, the well-liked Cornelius went on to marry three times. As was the case with many young, single male settlers, Cornelius's first wife, Alapetsa (Rosie), was Indigenous. Pressured by the Catholic Church, Cornelius ended their relationship and married Mary Ann McKenna. After her death in 1899, the 62-year-old Cornelius married 23-year-old Elizabeth Tierney.

Through these relationships, Cornelius fathered 17 children — enough to ice a hockey team. Along with detailing the rises and falls of the ranching, grain-growing and development businesses, the story chronicles the misadventures and tragedies surrounding this layered family. Amid issues of cultures and ages, soap-operatic tales of mistrust and loss were inevitable.

Mather ensures that the contributions of Cornelius's wives are documented in building their home and businesses. The significant roles played by the Syilx People and by Chinese immigrants (who initially arrived to build the railway) are also shared. Mather understands and evaluates the complexities of race, religion and wealth, and how these interplayed in this burgeoning community.

Eventually, Cornelius's son Tierney took over. With the ranch's fortunes fading, Tierney and his wife, Betty, reimagined the working ranch into a historic site. Located 13 kilometres from Vernon, B.C., the site officially opened in 1967 on the 100th anniversary of the ranch's founding.

Mather is a remarkable researcher who has clearly perused countless files to document the familial story. However, at times, the punctilious level of detail in the book will be best appreciated by O'Keefe family members or those with personal or community connections to the O'Keefes.

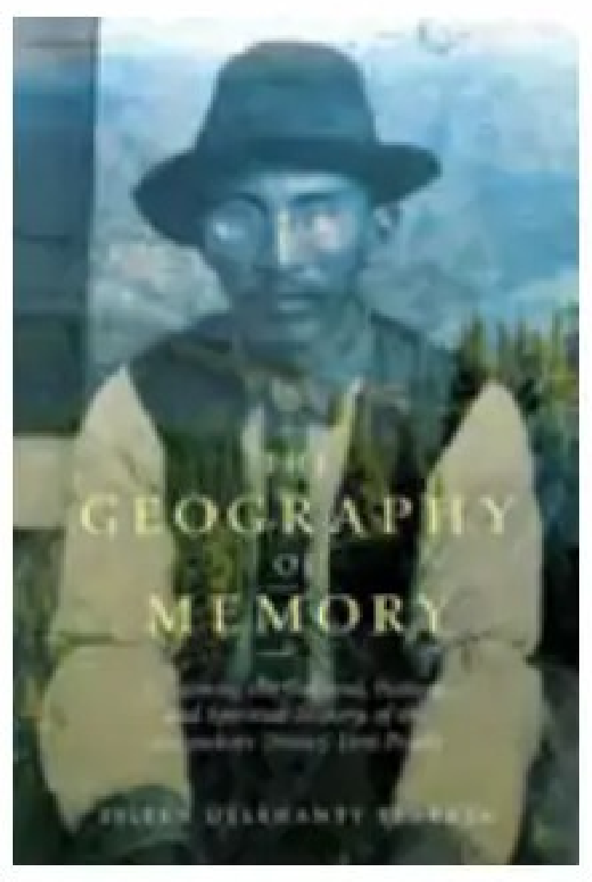
Ultimately, though, the book captures the heart of pioneering. We come to know men and women who see opportunity amid the challenges of social obstacles, finances and tragedy. As Betty O'Keefe wrote, "Pioneering is not a thing of the past; it is a thing of the spirit. It is an attitude – a pooling together of one's resources to do something." It is a trait worth celebrating.

Reviewed by **Glen Mikkelsen**, author of *The Rangeland Derby: 100 Years of Chuckwagon Racing at the Calgary Stampede*.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS

The Geography of Memory: Reclaiming the Cultural, Natural and Spiritual History of the Snayackstx (Sinixt) First People

by Eileen Delehanty Pearkes
Rocky Mountain Books, 278 pages, $30



In 1956, the Sinixt People were declared "extinct" by the Canadian government. They are, in fact, very much alive, and *The Geography of Memory* tells the story of this Interior Salish people whose traditional territory lies along the upper Columbia River in southeastern British Columbia and northeastern Washington State.

Eileen Delehanty Pearkes sees the land as a living museum that teaches us about the people who have inhabited it for thousands of years. Drawing on archaeological sources, she shows the long presence of the Sinixt People in the area. She demonstrates their emphasis on evenly sharing resources by exploring the different ways they use plants, hunt and butcher animals, and prepare and distribute food.

The book also presents stories drawn from oral history. One such story — which can be read as a symbol of larger colonial violence — involves a Sinixt woman named Sophie Green Blanket Feet. Born in 1834, Sophie married a European settler who later abandoned her, taking their two children. In some accounts, he sold her into slavery to another Indigenous person, but she escaped and found her way home. She remarried several times to different settlers, but was killed by her last husband after a visit to one of her estranged children.

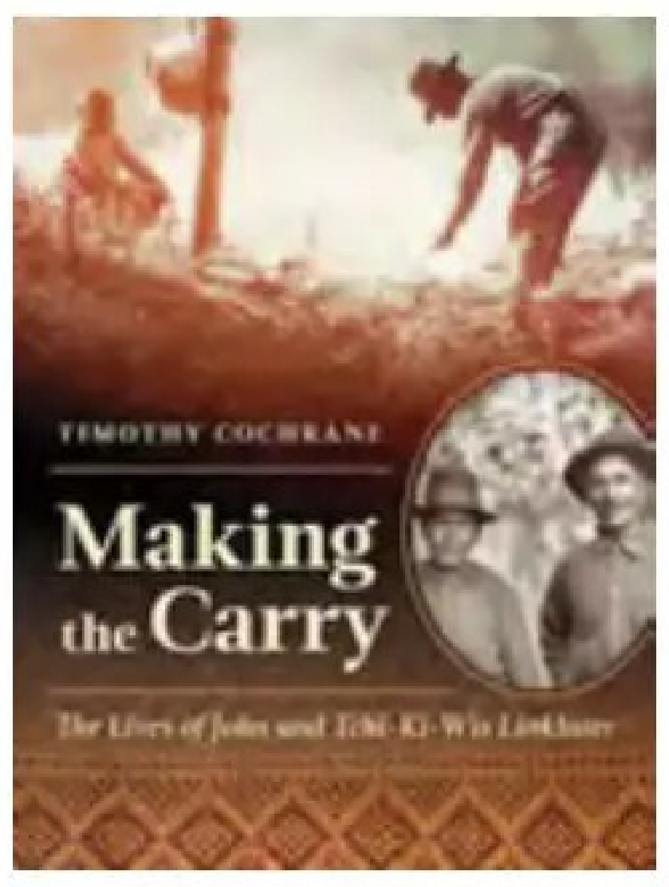
Anecdotes involving Elders, Chiefs, activists and researchers that Pearkes has met during more than 30 years of study reveal how the Sinixt continue to maintain their Indigenous identity.

Reviewed by **Aadya Arora,** online engagement coordinator at Canada's National History Society.

MEMORABLE MÉTIS

Making the Carry: The Lives of John and Tchi-Ki-Wis Linklater

by Timothy Cochrane
University of Minnesota Press,
352 pages, $34.99



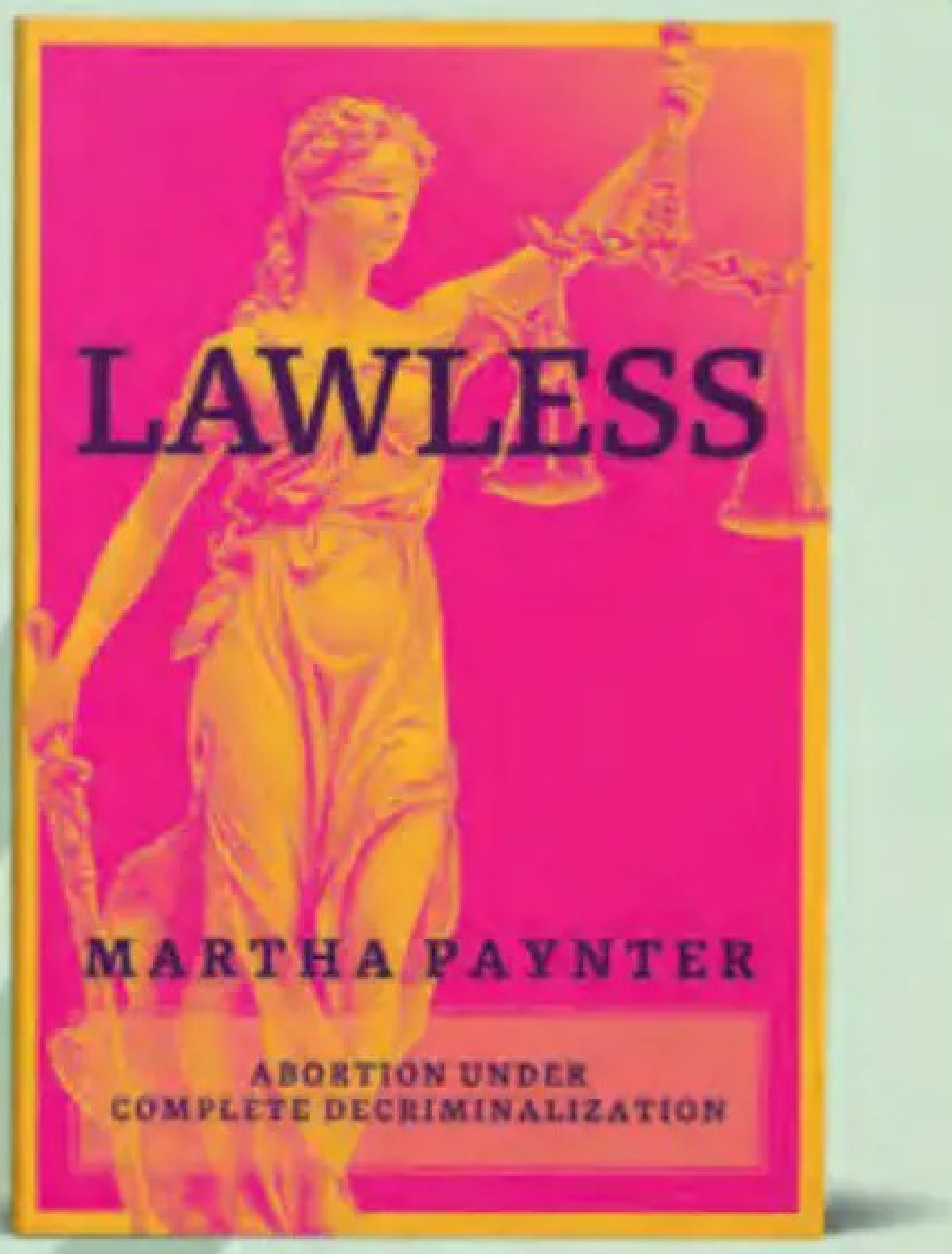
This book chronicles the lives of John and Tchi-Ki-Wis Linklater, a legendary Indigenous couple, at the turn of the 20th century. John was a famed Métis guide, trapper, hunter and game warden, while his Anishinaabe wife, Tchi-Ki-Wis, was a talented craftswoman and expert weaver of traditional cedar-bark mats.

Their lives intersected with the changes taking place in canoe country as logging, mining, railway building and road construction transformed the lands of Indigenous Peoples. As a guide to wealthy Americans who came north to hunt, fish and conduct research, John Linklater was highly respected. Yet his clients knew little about his personal life and even less about his wife's.

Timothy Cochrane, who has deep roots in the region as a U.S. National Park Service superintendent, dives into the archives to unearth details. He traces the Linklaters' family lines and their connections to the Hudson's Bay Company at the Red River Settlement, which became Winnipeg.

Making the Carry is enhanced by maps and illustrations, including many good photos of the Linklaters. Outdoor enthusiasts familiar with the region — which includes Ontario's Quetico Provincial Park, Michigan's Isle Royale National Park and Minnesota's Superior National Forest — will enjoy exploring its Indigenous history, which until recently has been largely ignored.

Reviewed by **Nelle Oosterom**, a frequent contributor to *Canada's History* magazine.



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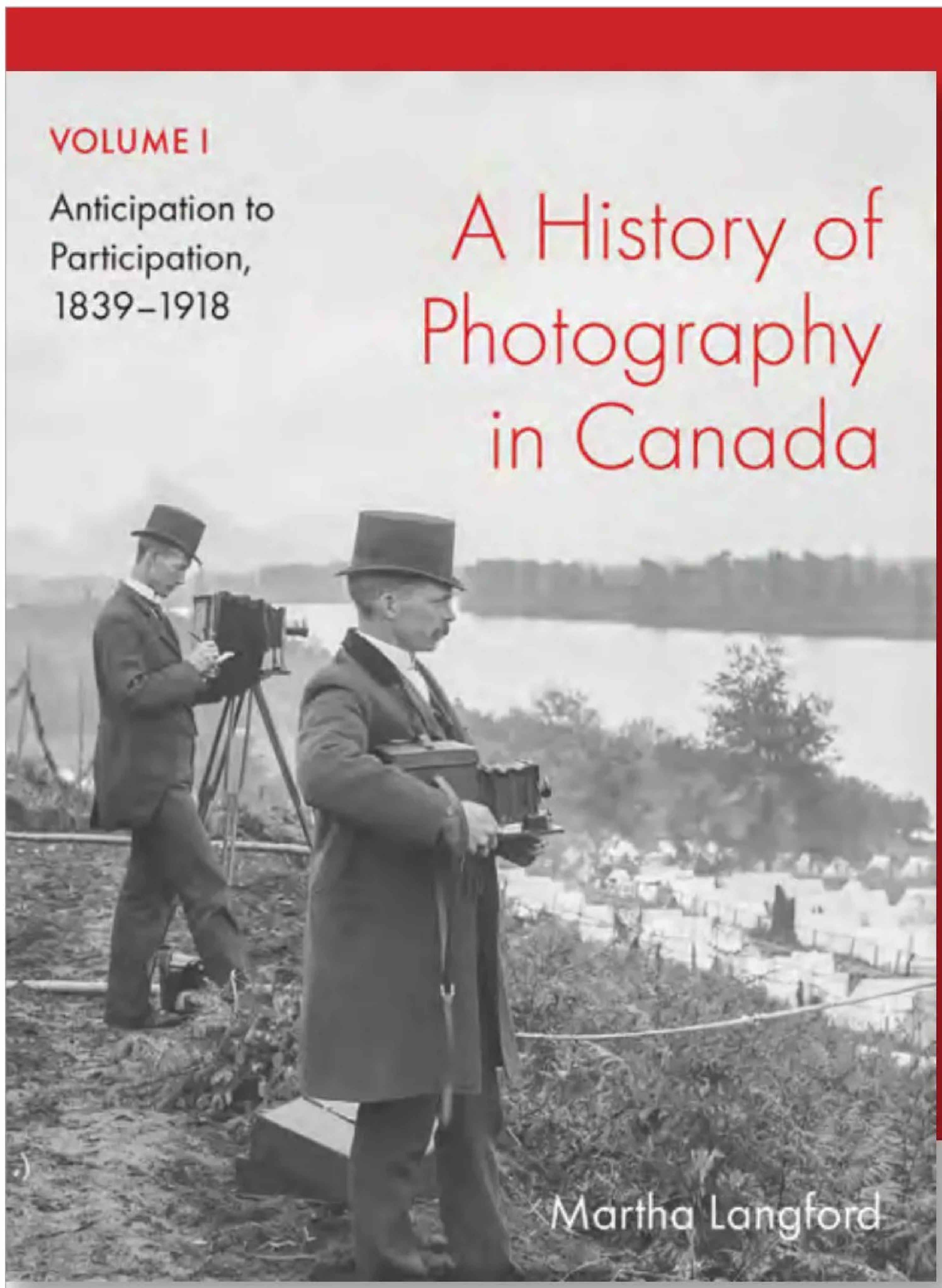
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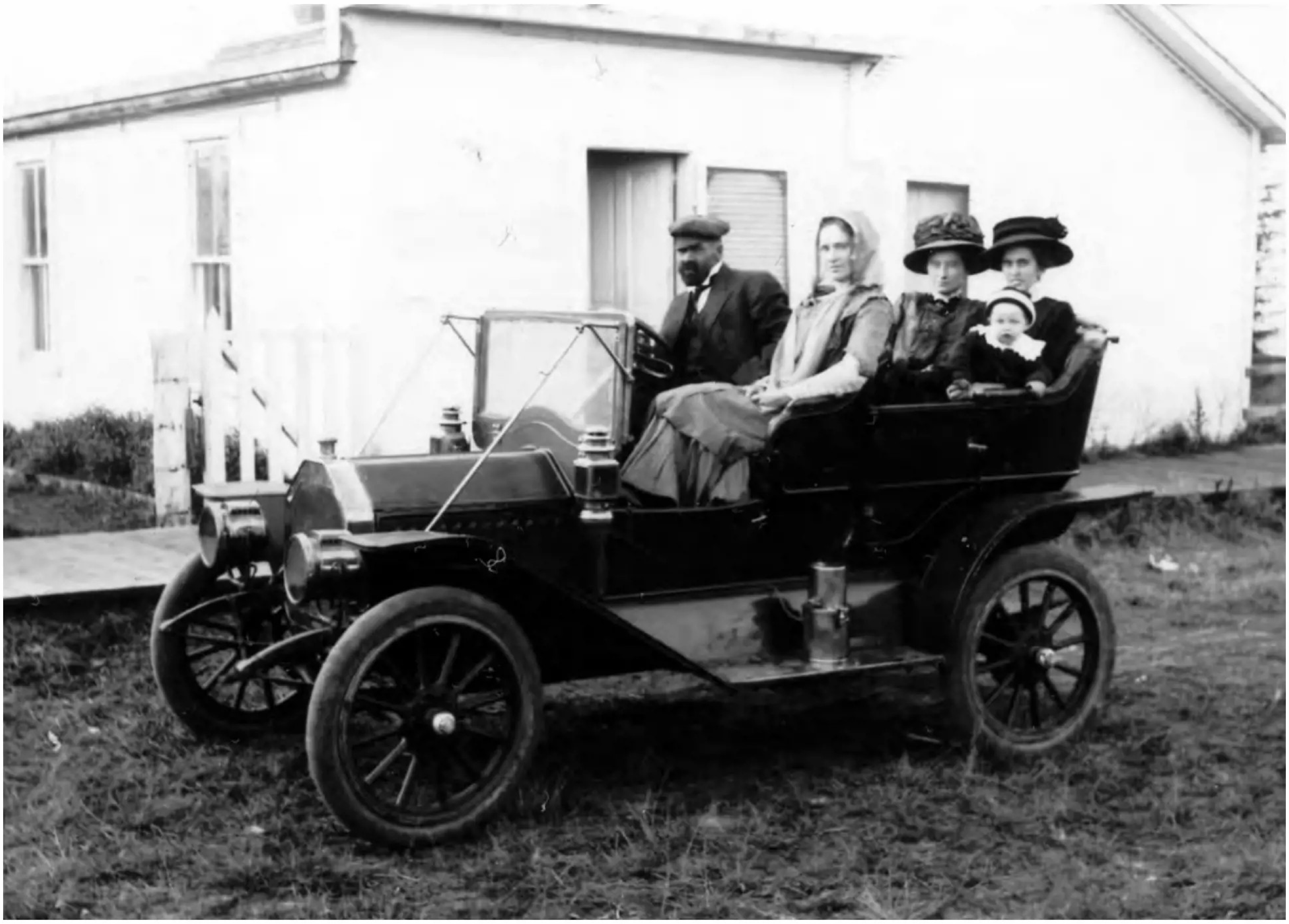

Driving pioneer

This photo shows my grandfather Ed Barnett driving his 1912 McLaughlin-Buick in Lacombe, Alta. Next to Ed is his wife, Nova Scotia-born Elvie. In the back are their neighbours Eliza McWilliams, Sadie Slater and Slater's son Herb.

Ed was born in 1858 in Almonte, Ont., the first of 10 children of William Barnett, a carpenter, joiner and sawmill owner from whom he learned construction skills.

Ed travelled to what is now Alberta and worked on cattle drives before enlisting with the North-West Mounted Police at age 20. In 1881, he was one of the Mounties who escorted Sitting Bull and his followers to the U.S. border.

Following his discharge, Ed constructed log houses for other former Mounties — until the government of Sir John A. Macdonald rewarded him with a sizable land grant for homesteading. Ed chose the Red Deer district and was the first settler in what became Lacombe.

Before the arrival of railways, Ed built a stopping house to serve stagecoach passengers and others travelling between Calgary and Edmonton. He also ran a cattle ranch. Ed and Elvie raised five children, including my father, Ralph, who was born in Lacombe in 1902.

That McLaughlin-Buick must have been quite a sight for the locals. In his diary, Ed described buying the car from a Calgary dealership whose owner gave him a quick driving lesson and pointed him in the direction of the gravel road that would take him home.

He enjoyed giving rides to family and friends on the limited dusty roads and trails designed for horse-drawn vehicles. Ed died when he was 81, a dozen years before I was born. I wish I could have met this grandpa, but my sense of him is encapsulated by that photo of the car.

Submitted by Vicki Barnett of Calgary.

Do you have a black-and-white or colour photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in Canada's history? If so, have it copied (please don't send priceless originals) and mail it to Album, c/o Canada's History, Bryce Hall Main Floor, 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9. Or email your photo to album@CanadasHistory.ca. Please provide a brief description of the photo, including its date and location, details about people appearing in the photograph, and further information about the event or situation illustrated. Photos may be adjusted for presentation in the magazine.

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